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HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

BY
GEORGE HASTINGS
AUTHOR OF
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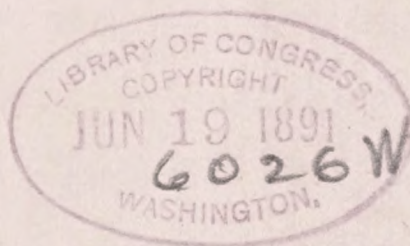
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS.

AN INTERNATIONAL EPISODE.

BY

GEORGE HASTINGS,

Author of "Philip Henson, M. D."



NEW YORK
EDWARD BRANDUS & CO.
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HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS.

BOOK I.

A TRIP TO EUROPE.

CHAPTER I.

A NEW WORLD MONEY KING.

THE establishment of John Parker Hepworth, pork packer and wholesale dealer in canned meats and choice lards, (see advertisements in the daily papers of the famous "Clover Leaf Brand") occupies the corner of a block in one of Chicago's most important business thoroughfares. At some little distance to the north is the vast clothing emporium of Willoughby, Hill & Co., and in the immediate neighborhood are many of Chicago's greatest and best known business houses.

In an ordinary way, the Hepworth establishment differs little from the other big institutions of the kind in its vicinity, except perhaps that it is a little larger, a little more aggressively important, and that its general air of prosperous

solidity is a trifle more pronounced, owing, doubtless, to the big, arching doorways, the width of the glittering plate glass windows, and the great granite blocks, their severity relieved only by the white stone copings, which compose the façade of the two lower stories. Still, whatever be the causes, certain it is that the establishment presents the appearance of a model business house—strong, substantial, solid—and Chicagoans are wont, to quote a favorite editorial expression of the local press, to “point with pride” to the big Hepworth Building as one of Chicago’s notable structures.

Not for a moment, however, must it be inferred that the business of John Parker Hepworth, pork packer and general dealer in canned meats and choice lards, of the widely advertised “Clover Leaf Brand,” is confined to this establishment, alone. This is merely the headquarters, embracing the general offices, the sample rooms, and a part of the canned goods department. Away out, scattered in various directions through the outskirts of the city, are immense stock-yards, vast warehouses and even vaster packing establishments, all dedicated to the interests of the “Clover Leaf Brand” in particular, and to the

business of John Parker Hepworth in general.

And then, there are the slaughter houses. It would never do to forget the slaughter houses—to Chicago a source of pride and a joy forever! Of these slaughter-houses, in which thousands of obese, but innocent hogs weekly yield up their lives, fabulous stories are narrated, it being asserted that the machinery of these establishments has been brought to such a point of perfection that within precisely two minutes and thirty-nine seconds after a hog enters the “death chute,” he comes out at the other end of the building neatly transformed into appetizing sausages, duly seasoned and in complete condition for the market.

Nor are Mr. John Parker Hepworth’s possessions limited to the big business building in the city’s center, the stock-yards, the warehouses, the packing establishments and last, but not least, the slaughter houses. In the far, far West, alike in the wild regions of Wyoming, along the slopes of Nevada’s hills, and in the fertile plains of Texas he owns vast ranches grazed over by almost countless herds, all branded with the H., surmounted by a clover leaf, the trade-mark of

the great Hepworth system, and destined to eventually find their way first to the great stock-yards in the outskirts of Chicago, and later still into cans of larger or smaller dimensions, which will bear the self-same H., surmounted by a clover leaf, as now marks the hide covering their well-fed flanks.

In a word, Mr. John Parker Hepworth controls one of the most far-reaching and important business enterprises of the West, and is one of Chicago's most prominent, most wealthy, and, what does not always necessarily follow, most popular citizens.

It is a bright May morning, one of those delicious mornings of the early spring, and although it lacks a good half hour of ten o'clock Mr. Hepworth is already seated at his desk in his private office in the main establishment. As he sits there in the full light of this bright May day he presents the appearance of a man whose fifty years have passed very lightly over his head. Above the middle height, erect of carriage and strongly built, the well-preserved and firmly knit figure carries a suggestion of athletic elasticity and ease. His face, clean shaven, save for short, carefully trimmed iron gray side whisk-

ers, and bronzed by exposure to the western winds during his frequent visits to his ranches, is marked by great determination and strength—a face which might perhaps be aptly described as leonine, with the short, wavy hair rising grandly above the forehead almost like the crest of a mane, the deep brown eyes, rather pensive in expression, the tightly compressed lips, and the powerful lower jaw. Decidedly the face of a strong man; one capable of being generous, kind, perhaps even tender; above all, bold, resolute, brave; but the face, too, of one dangerous to cross, obstinate in his enmity.

And in this instance the outward appearance is a truthful index to the inner man. In Chicago he is known as a shrewd, bold business operator, not to be frightened by the magnitude of an undertaking however great; a money-king who has risen to his present greatness by dint of brains and work and will; a citizen ever ready to come to the front financially in any public-spirited cause; a man whose word is his bond, but of whom it is ill-advised to make a foe, and who once believing himself wronged will spare neither effort nor money to drive his enemy to the wall.

Among the cowboys on the Western plains he is almost as well known as in Chicago, and they know him as a just man and one without fear; a hunter whose iron muscles seem to never feel fatigue; a rider who can upon occasion tame the wildest mustang turned out from the corral, and a shot, alike with revolver or rifle, who can rival the very best marksmen among them.

Vague rumors of his physical powers are rife even in Chicago. It is told of him how, one night, being attacked by two footpads he knocked one senseless and chastised his companion in such vigorous fashion that the latter's cries for aid finally attracted the attention of the police. It has leaked out, too, how upon another occasion, some years ago, he thrashed a big bully of the stock-yards, whom he had caught in the act of shamefully ill-using a horse, and who, inflamed with drink and not knowing the master, had replied insolently to his imperious order to desist.

However this may be, on this particular morning, dressed in neat fitting cutaway coat of dark material, he looks the quiet man of business, calm, thoughtful, and not without a certain dignity. Scattered before him in little heaps on his

desk are telegrams and letters from all parts of the country, to which he has just given his personal attention and has dictated the replies to a stenographer, who has retired with a bookful of notes. Now, his general manager, white-haired but active, is bustling about him seeking directions on various matters of such importance as to render desirable the personal decision of the head of the house.

“The Altonburgh & Denbigh branch road, sir,” declares the manager, consulting a batch of papers in his hand, “quotes us a rate for transportation even with that at present granted us by the Sante Fé. The Altonburgh & Denbigh’s facilities are somewhat better and the route shorter by a hundred and twenty miles than that of the Santa Fé. Shall we accept, say a six months contract?”

The head of the house reflects for an instant.

“No, Mr. Jennings, no,” he answers, presently, in a deep, full voice, and with just a suggestion of that broadness of accent peculiar to certain parts of the West, “we experienced a good deal of difficulty in our dealings with these Altonburgh and Denbigh people prior to the establishment of the opposition. Nothing could have been more

high-handed or indifferent than the behavior of these people when the game was in their hands. Our turn now. We will continue with the opposition. You will find them quoting a still lower rate, I think, before the snow flies."

Mr. Jennings bows in acquiescence.

"The superintendent of the Monterey Ranch reports a serious scarcity of feed owing to the failure of the last rainy season, and suggests putting the entire stock on stubble, which can be had two hundred and fifty miles further north."

"On what terms?"

"A dollar and a quarter an acre, sir."

"Approved. Let him engage three thousand acres."

"Calman & Stetson, our attorneys at Albuquerque, write that there is a flaw in the title of the *Sierra Madre* tract, embracing sixteen thousand acres, and that if we push our claim energetically we shall undoubtedly succeed in acquiring possession and securing an order from the courts dispossessing the settlers at present on the land. Morally, there is no doubt a big question in favor of the settlers, but legally every point is on our side. Calman & Stetson, in view of the great

hardships which would result from the dispossession of these settlers, suggests some slight compromise."

"I will consent to no such compromise."

"Are our attorneys, then, to be directed to act?"

"They are to be instructed to discontinue all proceedings at once."

"But," protests Mr. Jennings, "there is a considerable amount involved in this transaction, and legally we are unquestionably in the right."

"I care nothing about the legal part of it. Law and equity, it is my experience, are only too often very wide apart. The right or wrong of the thing is all I care about. It would certainly be a gross injustice, a shameful cruelty, to take advantage of the technical points against these settlers. I will have nothing to do with such a move. Order Calman & Stetson to discontinue all further action at once."

Again Mr. Jennings bows and passes to other topics.

Questions appertaining to the leasing or purchasing of vast tracts of land, contracts with railroads, matters of law involving tens upon tens of thousands of dollars, purchases of stock in this and that enterprise having affiliations with the

pork packing and canned meat industry, all these subjects are taken up in rapid and almost bewildering succession and disposed of with a promptness, clear-headedness and decision which are ever characteristic of the management of the affairs of this great house.

At last Mr. Jennings arrives at the end of the batch of papers in his hand and the head of the house gives a sigh of relief.

"Is that all for this morning, Mr. Jennings?" he asks.

"All, sir."

"Glad of it! I am anxious to be at leisure. My daughter starts for Europe to-day with her aunt. She is to drop in here for a moment on her way to the depot, just for a parting word. I want to get a last glimpse of my little girl, you know."

The whole face of the man suddenly softens, and there is just a suspicion of moisture in the widely-opened brown eyes.

"It's the first time she's been away from me for any length of time," he continues. "I confess I hate to see her go."

"Why let her go, then?" suggests the practical Mr. Jennings.

“Well, it seems all the craze now to visit Europe and I don’t want through any selfishness on my part to mar her pleasure. Most of the young girls of her set have already been to Europe ; why not she? Besides, owing to the companionship of her aunt, the opportunity is a specially good one.”

At this juncture a clerk enters with a message for Mr. Jennings and, his presence being required in some other part of the establishment, he hastily withdraws. Left alone, Mr. Hepworth leans back in his chair and stares meditatively before him for some moments. Then, leaning forward, he opens a drawer and brings forth two little frames which he places on the desk before him. Each frame contains a photograph—photographs of two women bearing such a marked resemblance the one to the other that the existence of some relationship between them is apparent at a glance. Such is, in fact, the case. They are the likenesses of his wife and daughter—the former lost to him in the first flush of her young womanhood, shortly after the birth of the latter.

He sits there looking at these two photographs, the one so like to the other, and a flood of reminiscence wells up within him. How like is the Edith

of to-day to his lost Zelma of twenty years ago ! It is as if the unkind fate which had robbed him of his wife had, relenting, restored her to him, in a measure, in the daughter. Looking back through the long vista of years he can recall as vividly as if it had been only yesterday the night when she passed from him and all earthly cares—glided from between the strong arms entwined about her as if to keep her by main force to earth and him—her last faintly whispered words : “ Jack, promise me, dear Jack, you will take good care of her.”

“ And right well has he kept his promise, this last promise to his dearly loved, his long and bitterly mourned Zelma. Zealously has he watched that life should contain nothing save that which was bright and sweet for her daughter. Although skilfully and industriously angled after by many a fair widow or maid, he has never even thought of bringing another woman into his house to take *her* place, to take precedence of *her* child. Yes, her wish has been well observed ; so far no cloud has ever darkened Edith’s life—never shall, God willing ! as long as he is there to stand between her and harm.

His reveries are interrupted by a sudden bustle

and commotion without ; and an instant later the door of the private office is pushed open and, amid a great rustling and *frou-frou* of feminine garments, a beautiful girl dressed in bewitching travelling costume trips gayly into the room. The term beautiful may assuredly with every propriety be applied to her. Tall and lithe, and very shapely, very white of skin and fair of hair, with a short, straight, pert little nose, a rosebud of a mouth, sunny brown eyes and a sweet mingling of stateliness and grace—such is Edith Zelma Hepworth, gay, happy and nineteen.

She trips across the red carpeted room with quick little steps, the tip of a daintily booted foot peeping every now and then from beneath her dress.

“Don’t scold me, Pop,” she exclaims, as she advances towards him, “for being late—I did try hard to get here sooner, but our carriage was caught in a blockade and delayed, oh ! ever so long.”

He rises to greet her, a flush upon his face, a great yearning in his eyes.

“Scold you, my dear,” he cries, “I certainly never felt less like doing that than to-day. I feel awfully blue over your going.”

"Poor Pop ! How I wish you were coming with us. How nice it would all be then."

"Impossible just now, my dear," he answers regretfully. "As Mr. Jennings was saying, the markets are very unsettled just at present."

"The horrid markets! There seems to be always something wrong with them."

He smiles, but attempts no reply to this sage commercial observation.

"I was hoping," he remarks, "that you would get here in time for us to have half an hour together before going, but," glancing at his watch, "I suppose it could not be helped and—you haven't much time left now if you are to catch the eleven train."

Both father and daughter looked at each other somewhat wistfully at this reference to their speedy parting.

"Be careful not to quite ruin me with those Paris fashions when you get over there," he exclaims, with a not very successful attempt at levity.

"Very well, Pop. I'll be careful," she answers in a rather unsteady voice.

"Nonsense, girl," he cries, fearful that she may by any chance have taken him seriously. "Buy

whatever takes your fancy, my little one. Whenever you need funds draw on me through my correspondents in Paris, Hazard *Frères*, as I have already explained to you. You are sure you understand."

"Yes, Pop."

She is oddly monosyllabic in her replies; she seems to be striving to keep something down in her throat.

"And now, dearie, you must go. As it is, you will have no time to spare to catch that train. I will take you to the carriage."

In spite of this warning, however, as to the progress of time, she still makes no move.

"I feel awfully blue over your going away from me," he repeats in a low voice, more in answer to his own thoughts than to her.

For a moment more she stands looking into his face and then, with a sudden movement, she is in his arms, her head nestling on his shoulder.

"So do I, Pop, and—and," with a strong indication of tearfulness in her tones, "I've changed my mind. I—I—don't want to go now. I don't want to go away from you."

At this point she abandons further resistance and sobs outright.

“Please go out to Aunt Kate,” she pleads, “and tell her I’m not going. I’ve changed my mind; I want to stay here, with you.”

He holds her to him very close, very tenderly. For an instant a vague longing, a wild impulse, comes to him to follow out his desire—her wish of the moment—and keep her with him at all costs. No, no; comes the answering thought; that would be mere selfishness. She is young; she will enjoy herself so much amid the strange sights of foreign lands. No selfishness of his shall mar her pleasure; the pleasure of his Zelma’s child.

With a last, long, lingering caress he leads her out to the carriage and seats her beside her aunt. An instant latter, in obedience to his command, the coachman has whipped up his horses and is driving with all speed to the depot.

CHAPTER II.

AN OLD WORLD HIGHNESS.

THE sun of the hot June morning is high over Paris, and noon has come and gone, yet His Royal Highness, Prince Raoul Alexander, and his favorite confidant and friend, Baron Barr, are still seated over the breakfast table. Not such a late breakfast after all, however, in view of the fact that the Prince and his friend had not sought their respective couches on the preceding night until the first rays of the summer morning had shown themselves very distinctly and very unmistakably in the east.

The Prince, despite a somewhat indiscreet wooing of Pommery Sec during the night's varied experiences, eats his breakfast with a heartiness and a relish that indicate a digestion of the very first order. Some scrambled eggs and a brace of lamb chops, washed down by the best part of a bottle of Sauterne, disappear in rapid succession, and now he is devoting his attention to a luscious bunch of grapes and a

glass of cognac, with which to top off the meal. A very creditable effort this for a man who has disposed of a couple of quarts or more of Pomery Sec during the preceding "wee sma' hours," to say nothing of a grievous mixture of sundry liqueurs, *pousse-café*s and other highly palatable and highly treacherous combinations. But then, Raoul Alexander always had been blessed with a good digestion; a digestion handed down to him as a sort of family heirloom from a long line of ancestors as part of the necessary stock in trade, so to speak, of royalty.

As he leans carelessly back in his chair, dressed in a short lounging jacket with light blue facings, crunching the luscious fruit beneath his strong, white teeth, he presents by no means an uncomely appearance. A tall, well-knit figure, shoulders rather square and well thrown back, the bearing marked by a certain military stiffness particularly affected by the Prussian school, large, straight and clearcut features, very light hair, light skin, a sweeping blonde moustache, and eyes of light blue shaded by long, fair lashes—these are the salient characteristics in His Highness' personal appearance. Decidedly a good-looking man, His Highness, judged by the standard of ordinary

men ; a strikingly handsome man, judged from the standard of princedom and as princes run ; a man, too, who carries his thirty-five years right royally and right well and who does not look a day older than his actual age, which is certainly noteworthy in view of the fact that he has contrived to jam into these five and thirty years fully double as much as the average human experiences in threescore and ten.

Not a bad fellow either, the Prince, as princes go ! Genial, light-hearted, full of good humor and fun ; never posing as Prince among his intimates, but always ready to meet them on the common ground of conviviality and good fellowship. True, upon occasion, when it was a question of figuring in his princely quality before the public, he understood how to bear himself with a gravity and decorum, with a certain blending of dignity and urbane condescension that showed he was indeed " to the manner born " and thoroughly understood the general business and make-up of a royal figurehead. Nor upon these serious occasions of state, when he was called upon to assume his princely mien, was his manner mere acting. In his inner consciousness he was honestly impressed with the conviction that the pro-

fession of kingcraft has its obligations and demands; that being "marked upon the brow" with the "Divine right" to rule, it was fitting that there should be that in his bearing which should suggest his semi-sacred character, his superiority over mere ordinary clay.

True, the kingdom over which his father at present reigns, and to the throne of which he is the heir presumptive, is a mere few miles of territory, a mere speck of country bordering upon two great empires, either one of which would have gobbled it up and annexed it long ago had it not been for the jealous rivalry of the other. Half-a-dozen times during the past half century the powerful neighbors had been on the point of arriving at an amicable understanding which would in the end indubitably have meant a partition of the prospective kingdom of Raoul Alexander between them. Disputes had, however, invariably arisen between the aforesaid powerful neighbors, each one in a frenzy of jealous dread lest one should get more out of the bargain than the other, and at the last moment negotiations had fallen through and the little kingdom has continued to maintain this coveted independence, forever trembling in the balance.

Personally, Raoul Alexander, to tell the truth, is supremely indifferent to this kingdom and the subjects over whom he will some day be called upon to rule, although at the same time he keenly appreciates the benefits accruing from the princely quality as also the income which this status assures to him. As far as his personal tastes are concerned, he infinitely prefers life in Paris, with its gaieties, its frivolities and its merry, if meretricious glitter to the stiff ceremoniousness and dull routine of court and official life at home. Such being the case—and being a man accustomed to largely consult his personal inclinations in preference to any other considerations on earth—he contrives to pass a goodly share of his time in Paris, where with a few choice spirits such as his friend Baron Barr he manages to lead a highly contented and by no means “slow” form of existence.

Hector de Barr, His Highness’ favorite intimate, presents an appearance sharply in contrast with that of the Prince. Short of stature, olive skinned, and dark as His Highness is fair, with large and very expressive dark eyes, a polished ease of manner and a self-possession which nothing has ever been able to disturb, the Baron is a

man by no means without a certain attraction. His chief charm, however, lies in the sharpness of his intellect and the cleverness of his tongue—his ever ready wit, his wonderful gift of repartee, and his polished impudence furnishing fruitful themes of gossip at the various clubs he frequents. Quite a *Don Juan*, too, is Baron Barr; an excellent “whip,” and a swordsman who has displayed much prowess in some half-dozen “affairs of honor,” in which he has been engaged—in a word, just the man suited to be the favorite confidant of a Highness of lively temperament and decided sportive proclivities.

At last His Highness, having finished his grapes, proceeds to light a short and very fat Turkish cigarette.

“Well, *mon ami*,” he exclaims, glancing across the table at the Baron, “what are your plans for this afternoon?”

“None in particular,” answered Baron Barr, lightly. “Suppose we drive; it is a beautiful day! How will that suit your Highness’ pleasure?”

“Impossible. I have an engagement.”

“Ah,” exclaims the Baron, with a laugh; “a petticoat?”

His Highness looks up and does precisely what a shop-boy might do under similar conditions. He winks.

"Just so," he answers.

"Something new?"

"No; not exactly."

"I wish you joy."

Thanks. As the *rendezvous* is at some little distance, I must begin to get ready."

"When will your Highness be visible again?"

"Meet me to-night at seven, at the club."

"Agreed."

"Two hours later, a tall, well-dressed man, his carriage marked by a certain military stiffness, saunters slowly along a quiet side street. He is evidently in no hurry, for he stops to look into every other shop window and when he reaches the corner he turns and goes over the ground again. This performance he repeats a couple of times; then glances sharply at his watch; looks inquiringly up and down the street, and next proceeds to flip viciously with his cane at the point of his highly polished boot.

Apparently the tall, well-dressed gentleman is becoming slightly impatient.

Just at this juncture, however, a hired coupé,

the blinds drawn down, turns the corner. It comes rather slowly along the street until at last, evidently in response to a jerk at the driver's cord from the person inside, it comes to a stop near the centre of the block. Instantly the tall, well-dressed gentleman is all animation. Quickly, but without ostentatious haste, he walks up to the coupé, mutters a brief word of direction to the driver, and then discreetly opening the door pops quickly inside—not so quickly, however, but a sharp-eyed passer-by at that moment catches a glimpse of a white skirt and a female figure in the further corner.

The door having been sharply banged to, the driver proceeds at a quick trot to a certain establishment—half restaurant, half hotel—somewhat remote from the livelier section of the city. Here the first occupant of the carriage, who is closely veiled, is assisted by her escort to alight. They have evidently been expected, for they are immediately shown to parlor 92—one flight, front.

There, alone with her escort and the waiter, who is busying himself about the room, the lady puts aside her veil and reveals a pretty face, vivacious and at the same time distinctively aris-

ocratic in its expression, and a pair of brown eyes which match well with the pure whiteness of her skin and which are flashing with added brightness at the moment, evidently as the result of the excitement incidental to the adventure. A sweet matron of some five and twenty summers is she, plump of figure and proud of bearing, dressed in the height of French fashion and Parisian taste ; a woman of rank too, doubtless, judging from the countess' coronet embroidered in the corner of the dainty cobweb of a lace handkerchief which is clutched nervously in her white hand.

Like the apartment, the luncheon seems also to have been ordered in advance, for it is served without delay ; and the lady's escort discourses the repast after the manner of a man blessed with excellent digestive powers and an enviable appetite. No sooner has the fruit been served, however, than the waiter is unceremoniously dismissed, and, to guard probably against any undesirable intrusion, the gentleman quietly pushes the bolt of the door.

"At last !" he exclaims, walking back to the table and drawing his chair nearer to his companion ; "at last we can chat at our ease. They

cook well here, but the service is abominably slow. It seemed to me they would never get through."

"Oh," declares the lady, with a coquettish pout; "I'm sure you have no right to complain. It seemed to me that you appreciated the lunch so well—especially that last *entrée*—that you had no eyes for me."

"What a sacrilege!" he cries, laughing, "to speak of yourself and the entrées in the same breath. That entremet, though, I must admit, was almost perfection."

"Come and dine with me some night this week" she pleads, "and I promise to introduce some new dishes that can hardly fail to win your Highness' serene approval. We have at the moment positively the best *chef* in Paris. Promise me to come."

"This week?"

"Yes; do not tell me now that you are engaged. You owe me a visit *de convenance*, you know."

"Oh, if you put it that way, my dear Countess," is the answer, given with mock ceremoniousness, "of course I feel bound to accept. What night?"

"Will Thursday night meet your Highness' pleasure?"

"Perfectly. But, by the way, Vera, speaking of that, do you know I have fancied I noticed a certain, what shall I say—suspiciousness—in your husband's manner of late. Do you think—"

The lady interrupts him with a gay little laugh.

"*He* suspicious," she exclaims, "really you credit him with too much discernment."

And again she laughs merrily—a laugh so contagious that involuntarily he joins her in it.

"It is agreed, then—Thursday," she says, presently.

"Yes," he replies, "and I herewith affix my seal to the agreement."

"The Royal seal?"

"Yes; if you will so have it," he laughs.

Drawing his chair still closer to her, he passes his arm about her neck and imprints a long kiss upon her upturned lips.

"Is there only one seal to the royal agreement?" she exclaims, looking up at him coquettishly as he raises his head.

"No, several," he cries, again bending.

His lips have just met hers in this second em-

brace, when there is a sudden noise of feet outside, and then the handle of the door is sharply turned and rattled.

Both the occupants of the room start and glance with looks of surprise and alarm toward the door.

An instant later, there is a loud, impatient knock :

“Open ! ” comes the imperious command.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE NAME OF THE LAW !

"WHATEVER can it be!" whispers the lady, clinging to her escort's arm and looking up apprehensively into his face.

"Wait; let us keep quiet for a moment and see," he whispers back.

"Open the door," again comes the command. Silence from within.

"We have been followed; I am lost!" exclaims the lady, now very pale in her excitement.

Her escort glances hastily about him, a rather savage expression on his face, in search of some way of evasion for her. None seems to present itself, however. Just behind a sofa ranged along the wall is a door. He goes over to this door on tiptoe, carefully avoiding making any noise, and tries it. Useless attempt; it is locked.

Just as he is turning away, however, there is a light grating sound, as of a key cautiously ap-

plied, and an instant later the door swings open and the landlord of the hotel, pale and trembling visibly, appears on the threshold. Putting his finger to his lips to caution silence, he beckons to the lady. No second suggestion is needed. In a twinkling she has stepped upon the sofa and has been assisted by the landlord into the adjoining room.

“And you?” she whispers to her companion.

“I? oh, I must stay and face the music! It is enough for me if you escape.”

“I will attend to that,” hurriedly whispers the landlord. “This room opens on a side corridor. Let us make haste!”

Without another word, he quickly shuts the door and locks it.

Again a knock, this time more imperative than ever:

“Open, I say!”

“Who is there?” demands the now solitary occupant of the apartment.

“Open, in the name of the law!”

Certain ominous sounds make themselves heard, indicating that preparations are being made to instantly force an entrance.

Without waiting further, the occupant of the

room goes to the door and slowly draws back the bolt.

“Did you knock?” he asks, with imperturbable effrontery.

Throwing wide open the door, he finds himself confronted by a *Commissaire* of Police, accompanied by his clerk and two policemen in plain clothes. Some little distance along the corridor, faintly outlined in the shadow, is the figure of a man—the husband, doubtless, awaiting developments.

Instantly the *Commissaire* strides into the apartment, while his men remain on watch just beyond the threshold. Glancing quickly about him, his eye detects the door in the wall and he at once walks over to it and tries it. It is locked.

“Where is the person who was here with you?” demands the *Commissaire*.

“What person?”

“The woman.”

The occupant of the room laughs sarcastically :

“Woman! I don’t see any woman; do you?” he answers.

At the same time he scans the *Commissaire* anxiously. A gruff devil, evidently! he thinks to himself. One of those fellows hard to manage.

"No, I don't see her," answers the police officer, still glancing about him, "but I'll guarantee my men will find her in very short order."

He walks to the door and gives an order to his men; then turns back into the apartment.

"How did this come here?" he asks, pointing to the imprint of a feminine boot-heel in the cushions of the sofa.

"What?"

"This boot-heel."

"Does that look to you like a boot-heel?"

The *Commissaire* makes no reply to this tantalizing inquiry, but beckons to his clerk.

"Your name, age, residence and occupation?" he demands.

"Victor Durand, gentleman, residing with Baron Barr at his apartments in the Avenue Kléber."

"Don't write that down," the *Commissaire* orders his clerk. "It is useless," he continues, turning to the person he is questioning, "to furnish any incorrect answers. The duty I have to perform may be disagreeable to you, but I shall nevertheless endeavor to execute it to the full. Since you decline to accurately identify yourself, I will do it for you. You are Prince Raoul Alexander,

of H——; thirty-five years of age, residing at your mansion in the *rue* Monceau. This afternoon you left home at eighteen minutes past two and went on foot to the *rue* Thabor, up and down which you strolled for some time in front of the houses numbered from ten to forty-six. You looked into several of the shop windows and twice consulted your watch. A few minutes before three o'clock a coach bearing the number 1042, and which is waiting below at this moment, drove up and stopped within a few feet of you. You at once stepped into this coach, seated in which was a lady closely veiled, and drove straight to this restaurant, where you were shown to this room. As for the lady—"

"If you know her, or think you do," quickly interrupts Raoul Alexander, "there is no necessity to speak her name."

"I merely wish to convince you," answers the *Commissaire*, "that we are fully acquainted with your movements as also with hers, and that you are simply wasting time in seeking to mislead us. I have been called upon to act by the husband in the case, and I mean to carry out the instructions as laid down by the law in such matters."

Raoul Alexander shrugs his shoulders. This

police officer is obviously one of those fiercely democratic fellows one runs across sometimes ; there is nothing to be done with such a man !

“She went out by that door ; there was no other way,” mutters the *Commissaire*, following out the trend of his own thoughts. “She can’t be far, though ; we shall find her, I think !”

Raoul Alexander flushes angrily, but makes no comment, and at that instant one of the *Commissaire*’s men appears at the door, his attitude indicating that he has some report to make. The *Commissaire* steps out of the room to hear it. A moment later he returns looking flushed and annoyed. Evidently the mission of his men has not been successful ; the landlord has succeeded in making good the escape.

“You will please sign these papers,” says the *Commissaire*, curtly, holding out a statement of the proceedings drawn up by his clerk.

“No, sir,” answers Raoul Alexander, haughtily. “You are at liberty to mistake me for whom you will ; you may indulge in whatever imaginings may please your fancy regarding my identity, my movements and my presence here ; but I, on my side, call upon you to record in your official notes that I declare myself to be Victor Durand,

gentleman, residing with my friend, Baron Barr, at his apartments in the Avenue Kléber. I am quite ready to go with you to the office of the Prefect of Police, if you so wish, but I distinctly refuse to sign your papers, or to answer any further questions. Now, sir, make up your mind quickly as to what you wish to do, for I am pressed for time."

The *Commissaire* hesitates, evidently deliberating as to what next to do.

"You refuse to sign these papers?" he asks, finally.

"Most positively."

"Very well, then ; your formal refusal will be noted. Nothing more is required for the present."

Raoul Alexander strides to the door, and upon a sign from the *Commissaire* to his men is allowed to pass out.

"A nice mess ! What a beastly scandal this is going to make if it leaks out !" he mutters, as he reaches the street.

CHAPTER IV.

THAT GUILTY HEEL.

SHORTLY after six o'clock that evening, just as the *Commissaire* is in the middle of a very comfortable little dinner at home, a message is brought to him direct from the Prefect of Police. It is extremely brief and extremely to the point :

“ Report here at once ! ”

Quickly bringing his dinner to an end, the *Commissaire* sets out. Fifteen minutes later he presents himself at official headquarters, and is at once admitted to the presence of the Chief. The latter is striding impatiently up and down his office. It is obvious to the *Commissaire* at a glance that he has been expected ; it is equally obvious to him at a glance that the Chief is unwontedly excited.

“ Ah,” he exclaims, abruptly, as the *Commissaire* enters and salutes, “ so here you are ! A pretty snarl you have managed to get this department into. Why, it seems to me you must have taken leave of your senses.”

"In what connection, sir?" stammers the *Commissaire*, overwhelmed by the anger of his superior.

By way of answer, the Prefect angrily throws down on the table before the *Commissaire* the report drawn up by that official at the hotel that afternoon.

"What in the world can you have been thinking of!" cries the Prefect, angrily. "According to your own report, you knew that you were dealing with a Highness, a prince of the blood royal, the son of a reigning monarch, and yet you took it upon yourself to act without consulting your superiors! What can you have been thinking of, sir; what can you have been thinking of, I ask!"

"But, *Monsieur le Préfet*, I was legally called upon to act."

"By whom?"

"By the Comte de Vigny, the husband."

"The husband! all the more reason why you should have foreseen trouble ahead and have avoided the responsibility."

"But the husband stood upon his legal rights and demanded—"

"To the mischief with the husband!"

“My duty—”

“Duty be hanged!”

“But the law—”

“Confound the law! What has all this to do with the matter when one is dealing with a prince of the blood!”

The unfortunate *Commissaire* is so taken aback by the ire of his chief that for the moment he is unable to find an answer.

“Then, again,” continues the Prefect, flushing anew with indignation, “I find that your manner toward this exalted personage was simply, to say the least, disrespectful in the extreme. You seem to have plied His Highness with questions as if he were a common pickpocket caught in the act of stealing a purse, and when he graciously deigned to open up for you a loophole of escape by furnishing you with a fictitious name—what do you do! Why, you insult him by parading your confounded items—your particulars—your—oh! I’m ashamed that one of my men should have blundered so stupidly!

“A nice mess you have drawn us into,” resumes the Prefect. “His Excellency, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of H——, has been here and has made

representations on the subject. I confess I was ashamed, and hardly knew what to say to him. As it is, I have promised to see him again to-night and report to him what steps have been taken to hush up this regrettable incident. A pretty mess if this affair should leak out in one of the newspapers. A pretty mess, sir, and all through you!"

"I only thought to do my duty, *Monsieur le Préfet*," answers the *Commissaire*, humbly.

"Your duty!" thunders the Prefect, smiting the table with his fist. "Great heavens, man! can't you understand that when you are dealing with persons of that rank your business is to take orders, not to give them? This, it seems to me, ought to be perfectly clear to anyone except a born idiot."

Humble as is the *Commissaire's* rank in the administrative hierarchy, he cannot find it in him to tamely accept this rebuke.

"*Monsieur le Préfet*," he answers, sturdily, "legally cited, in the name of the Law, to execute my duty, I saw only the Law, and I carried out its mandates, without respect for persons and regardless of distinctions not recognized by the Republican form of government and glorious

democratic constitution under which we in France to-day live."

The Prefect—whose office entitles him to call himself "Honorable"—bursts into a laugh.

"The glorious democratic constitution!" he cries. "That sounds well, doesn't it? especially in an election speech. Worth three rounds of applause at the Porte St. Martin Theatre! But, my patriotic friend, the question now is not our 'glorious democratic constitution,' but your extremely stupid blunder. Luckily for you, wiser heads are at hand to repair that blunder. Sit down and write me another report of this affair."

"I really cannot, *Monsieur le Préfet*; I prefer to tender my resignation."

The Prefect bites his lips. If the story of this resignation is gotten hold of by the opposition newspapers, he foresees the possibility of a scandal worse than the first looming up on the horizon.

"I cannot accept your resignation," he says at last, in a more conciliatory tone. "A soldier who deserts in the face of the enemy is a coward. Since you are such a slave to duty, I call on you to stand by your colors. Sit down and write at my dictation."

"No use, *Monsieur le Préfet*; no use at all. The husband has a copy of the document you would set aside."

The Prefect drops into a chair, overwhelmed.

"You don't say so!" he gasps. "It is even worse, then, than I thought."

The *Commissaire* shifts his feet awkwardly. He is filled with a vague wish that the floor might open and let him through.

"Did you make any mention of His Highness's name in this report you gave to the husband?" inquires the Prefect at last, partially recovering himself.

"No," answers the *Commissaire*, "I did not do so, no formal evidence as to his identity having been as yet adduced. I simply set forth the facts and stated that the occupant of the apartment had described himself as one Victor Durand, a name believed to be fictitious."

"Well," declares the Prefect, with a sigh of relief, "that is better. I think we may find our way out of this matter yet. Prepare me another report, much briefer than this one, simply stating that you found the apartment occupied by one Victor Durand, omitting any reference to your erroneous belief that this name was a fictitious one."

“But the law!”

The Prefect glares at his subordinate through his spectacles.

“I think I’ve remarked before: Confound the Law!” he exclaims, “when a public scandal involving personages of this importance is in question. I tell you, you have been following a false scent.”

“A false scent!”

“Yes. I have here an official declaration that His Royal Highness, Prince Raoul Alexander, breakfasted this morning at the house of the Ambassador of his august father, His Majesty, the King of H——, where he was busily engaged, from ten in the morning until five in the afternoon, over weighty diplomatic affairs affecting the interests of his future subjects, whose well being is ever his closest care.”

“Then, I am to understand that it was really Victor Durand, gentleman, with whom the Baroness de Vigny lunched?”

“The Baroness de Vigny did not lunch with anybody,” answers the Prefect, with dignity. “The Baroness, in fact, did not lunch at all! She was at home superintending her household till mid-day, and then only left the domestic hearth to

make some necessary purchases to embellish that hearth, and to pay such social visits as her position in the world of fashion imposes on her. You thus perceive that you have been entirely on a false scent, as I said before. Sit down and write me a new report, omitting all names, and simply stating that being called upon to enter a certain apartment, you did so and found there one Victor Durand, gentleman, alone."

"BUT HOW ABOUT THAT HEEL?"

"What heel?"

"That boot-heel, the imprint of which was found upon the covering of the sofa?"

"A guilty boot-heel, evidently!" answers the Prefect, solemnly, "since the owner was in such haste to decamp; but a heel against which no complaint can well be lodged as there is no evidence as to its owner."

"And the report already given to the husband?"

"A hasty report, drawn from you in a moment of inadvertence and not fully substantiated by your later official report! We shall manage to find some flaw in it. There, there; sit down and prepare these papers as I have directed you and I will attend to the rest. I think we shall extricate ourselves from this muddle yet!"

Sorely tried in spirit, the *Commissaire* seats himself at the desk indicated by the Prefect and gives his attention to the preparation of his new report.

The Prefect comes over to his side.

“Make it very short; be careful not to say too much!” he orders. “And, by the way, let me give you a piece of advice. If ever again you run up against a Highness, let him,” with an expressive motion of the hand, “slip through your fingers—let—him—quietly—slip—through your—fingers. They are not safe to handle, these Highnesses. They burn!”

CHAPTER V.

WHERE THE DEUCE IS CHICAGO?

WHILE the *Commissaire* is undergoing such an unpleasant interview in the office of his chief, Raoul Alexander is experiencing an almost equally unpleasant half-hour with his thoughts at home. He is stretched upon a low divan, smoking a cigar, and turning over in his mind all the possibilities of the scandal which seems likely to evolve from this unfortunate affair. Instead of meeting his friend Baron Barr at the club as arranged, he has sent a message requesting the Baron to come to him at once, and the latter, in obedience to this summons, soon arrives.

After hearing from the Prince the account of his adventure, the Baron is at first disposed to make light of it.

"I am surprised at the impudence of that police fellow!" he exclaims.

"I didn't care so much about that," declares the Prince; "I was mostly worried, first about

her, and next about the scandal the thing is likely to kick up. I am afraid there is going to be a good deal of a row about it."

"Suppose there is," rejoins the Baron. "At the worst, it can't do you any very great harm."

"Here, no," answers Raoul Alexander, "but out there!" and he waves his hand in a certain direction.

"Oh, yes, I see," exclaims the Baron, speaking with that bold familiarity peculiar to him and which, in the closeness of their intimacy, he adopts even with His Highness, "in your future kingdom, eh? Pshaw! why should you bother yourself about that? Look around you on every side at your brother kings and princes. Is their conduct so nice that they might serve as models of the virtues for their subjects! Why, if I may be permitted the question," and the Baron laughs lightly, "should your Highness be expected to be any better behaved than others of his class?"

Raoul Alexander joins in the laugh.

"No," he says meditatively, "it is not exactly my people who are worrying me."

"Who then? Are you afraid that the parliament will cut down your allowance?"

"Can't you be serious for a moment?" exclaims

Raoul Alexander. "You forget that besides the people and the parliament and all the rest of it, about which I don't care a straw, there is my father, who overwhelms me with remonstrances—"

"That's a way all fathers have. They forget what they themselves did when they were young. Shouldn't take that kind of thing too much to heart!"

"My mother, too, who writes me sermons—"

"Don't read them. Surely, that's easy enough!"

"Easy enough to *say*, yes!"

"And to do, or rather not to do, for that matter."

"It seems to me," declares Raoul Alexander, "that you hardly look at this matter with enough seriousness."

"And it seems to me," retorts the Baron, "that your Highness does not fully appreciate his position and privileges. Here are you, a prince of the blood, and you allow yourself to be browbeaten by a miserable little police functionary, under the ridiculous pretext that he represents the law. The law, eh! Why, are not you yourself a maker of laws? Your Highness

forgets what is due to himself and his Order! And then, not content with having submitted to all this, here you are worrying yourself into a fever over this scandal that may possibly ensue. All this is really absurd. The way out of it is easy enough ; simply don't trouble your head about it, that's all ! Quietly burn up the paternal remonstrances, without reading them, and take good care not to open any of the other letters from home just for the present. And now, to drive away more foolishness on this subject, suppose we go to the club."

"No ; we are going to the opera to-night," answers the Prince.

"To the opera !"

"Yes."

"What, again ?"

"Yes ; I am going again to-night."

"Oh, oh ! there's something behind that—again a petticoat, I'll wager."

Raoul Alexander smiles slyly, but makes no answer.

"Come," cries the Baron, "I think I'm entitled to an admission if I've guessed correctly."

Raoul Alexander draws nearer to his friend.

"Listen," he says, confidentially, "it's the

most interesting, the most romantic affair, you could imagine. The other night I dropped in during the last act at the *Théâtre Français*, and while looking over the house I saw in one of the boxes just the most delightfully charming little face and figure I've come across in many a day."

Raoul Alexander pauses impressively and looks at his friend as much as to ask, "What do you think of that?"

"Well?" says the Baron, expectantly.

"There was about her," continues Raoul Alexander, with enthusiasm, "a certain charm, a certain freshness that impressed me at the first glance. The more I looked at her the more I was attracted, and you know I'm not very impressionable."

"Hem!" coughs the Baron.

"She is certainly not a *Parisienne*," resumes Raoul Alexander; "of that I am confident. As far as I could judge, she is either English, or perhaps Russian. Well; I waited until the fall of the curtain and then managed so as to get close to her in one of the exits. A nearer view of this charmer did not—as is lamentably so often the case—destroy the attraction. Close to her, I found her even more bewitching than ever."

“Not a case, then, of distance lending enchantment?”

“No. I was very close to her—so close that I could hear what she said, and then the idea I had already formed that she was not a *Parisienne* was confirmed. She talks French with an accent that is simply—simply—ravishing,” declares Raoul Alexander, at a loss for a word to sufficiently forcibly express his meaning.

“Well?” again exclaims the Baron, evidently impatient to learn the outcome of this “romantic” episode.

“Well,” echoes Raoul Alexander, “as I was saying, I was so near her and those accompanying her that I could hear what they said. In the lobby they ran against some acquaintances, and from an invitation which was then extended I most fortunately managed to gather that they had made arrangements to attend a certain representation to-night.”

“Which means the opera?” exclaims the Baron.

“Precisely.”

“And that is why we are going to the opera to-night?”

“*Mon cher*, you are a wonderful guesser!”

"Very well," cries the Baron, gayly, "to the opera let us go, and view this fair charmer your Highness vaunts so greatly."

Half an hour later Raoul Alexander and his companion arrive at the opera, just as the curtain is going down on one of the acts. Hardly are they fairly settled in their seats when His Highness adjusts his opera glass and begins making a careful survey of the house. His glass has not travelled far when it suddenly comes to a stop, centred on one of the boxes.

"There, there she is," comes in a low whisper from his parted lips.

The Baron follows the direction indicated by the glass and has no difficulty in locating the box. In it are seated three persons—an elderly lady of rather commanding figure, whose white hair against a youthful looking skin becomes her well; a young lady, and a man of some thirty-five years. To the younger of these two ladies the Baron confines his attention for some moments.

"Not at all bad!" he murmurs presently.

"I should say not," retorts Raoul Alexander, with vigor.

"I wonder who she is," he continues, after a pause, his glass still bracketed on the box.

"I know the man," answers the Baron.

"Who is he?"

"Mr. George Gorman Halstead, one of the Secretaries of the American Legation here."

"Ah!"

"Which leads to the inference that she is neither English nor Russian, as your Highness was pleased to surmise, but probably an American."

"*Mon cher*," says Raoul Alexander, impressively, "I want you to find out all about her."

Baron Barr glances slowly over the house.

"I think I can do that without difficulty," he replies. "I see in a box over there, Mr. William Hanley Gardiner, the proprietor of *The New York Trumpeter*. If she be really an American, he can probably tell us all about her."

"You think so?"

"Well, a man who has two papers in New York, two in Paris, another in London and a cable under the ocean ought certainly to be a mine of information."

"So he ought to be," laughs Raoul Alexander.

"Will you go and see him?"

"Not now. See, the curtain is just going up."

During the final act, Raoul Alexander's glass is

directed a great deal more toward a certain box than upon the stage. As the act is drawing toward its close, the Baron, in obedience to the princely behest, rises and makes his way to the box of Mr. William Hanley Gardiner. Ten minutes after the close of the performance he joins Raoul Alexander, as has been arranged between them, in the lobby.

"Have you found out anything?" eagerly inquires His Highness.

"Everything."

"Well?"

"The gentleman is—"

"Yes, yes—Secretary of the American Legation. You've told me all about *him*."

"The elderly lady," continues the Baron, with malicious slowness, "is a Mrs. Patterson, a widow, the aunt of the charmer."

"And she—*she*?"

"Is Miss Edith Zelma Hepworth, of Chicago."

"Where the deuce is Chicago?"

The Baron smiles. He is well used to these little educational lapses on the part of His Highness.

"In the United States of America, if it please your Highness. She is, it appears, the

daughter of some fellow out there who sells pork."

"Pork!" cries His Highness, aghast.

"Yes; salt pork, or potted pork, or something of the kind. Anyway, it's pork."

"I don't care," cries Raoul Alexander, obstinately, "if her father sells potted devils! She is the most bewitching creature I've seen in many a day. You didn't forget, *mon cher*, to find out how I might manage to meet her?"

"Am I in the habit of forgetting such details?" asks the Baron, reproachfully. "No; I attended to that. Next Thursday there is to be a ball—quite a notable affair—at the American Minister's in London. She will be present, I have learned."

"You must get us invitations."

"That can readily be managed through our friend Mr. William Hanley Gardiner."

"Yes, yes; I forgot. What a delicious complexion she has; did you notice?"

"They say," answers the Baron, with sly malice, "that pork, externally applied, is a fine thing for the complexion."

"Good-night," exclaims Raoul Alexander, abruptly.

“You are not going to the club?”

“No,” savagely, “good-night!” and in an instant His Highness is striding down the boulevard alone.

“Edith Zelma Hepworth,” he murmurs to himself; “what a pretty name! Of Chicago. Chicago, eh? Somewhere in the neighborhood of New York, I suppose!”

And this ignorance is not affected; he has in reality not the slightest idea as to Chicago's precise location in the Union. He can ride well, drive well, fence well, dress well, and above all, knows how to pose well, but beyond this, as a matter of fact, his education is sadly deficient. From an educational standpoint, his ignorance is in some respects so dense as to be a source of shame to the veriest dunce in a village school. Yet, here is a man who, his father having passed away, might to-morrow be called upon to govern a nation; who would have the power, should it seem to him meet and good, to plunge his country into war and lead to battle every able-bodied male among his subjects; who would direct great diplomatic negotiations and be a controlling factor in questions of legislation, finance, commerce—and all this without his ever

having been at the pains of learning anything about the science of war or of diplomacy, about law, commerce or finance.

But, how absurd to cavil at this! Is he not of royal blood, and is it not one of the radical tenets of the monarchical idea that "the king can do no wrong;" that to men of his illustrious order, born to the purple and marked on the brow with the Divine right to rule, everything comes as a matter of course, without their having ever been to the trouble of learning anything!

Raoul Alexander, his mind much taken up with this American "charmer," strolls slowly home and goes to bed, his last lazily drifting thought as he drops asleep being a vague wonder whether Chicago is on the outskirts of New York, or simply a sort of suburb of Boston.

CHAPTER VI.

A ROYAL REBEL.

JUST as Raoul Alexander is sitting down to breakfast next morning, a note is brought to him from the Ambassador representing his father's court at the French capital. It contains unpleasant news. It informs His Highness that the adventure of the previous day threatens to be followed by most undesirable consequences. All efforts to hush up the scandal have proved unavailing, the Comte de Vigny having separated from his wife and having taken measures to bring an action for divorce. Powerful influence has been brought to bear to hush up the matter, the Ambassador declares, but has so far proved utterly ineffective.

And His Excellency, the Ambassador, tells the literal truth in declaring that extraordinary efforts have been exerted. As a matter of fact, message after message has been sent on the subject from the French Department of Foreign Affairs to the Department of the Interior, which

department has in turn communicated at length with the Prefect of Police. Then, too, dispatches in cipher have been exchanged by the dozen between the Embassy in Paris and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in H——. In both countries any number of Under Secretaries, to say nothing of a small army of minor officials, are kept rushing about, inditing dispatches, and fixing up cipher telegrams. It is as if the peace of Europe were at stake! All this official perturbation and activity, however, seem destined to run to waste, for the aggrieved husband keeps on in his preparations looking to legal redress, unshaken by all official efforts to induce him to believe he is in the wrong. Decidedly an obstinate man, the Comte!

This state of affairs is kept up for forty-eight hours. On the afternoon of the third day, as Raoul Alexander returns from a drive in the *Bois*, he is met with the announcement that Baron von Bieler is awaiting him. This announcement seems to somewhat disturb His Highness.

“Who is this Baron von Bieler?” inquires Baron Barr.

“My father’s private secretary and confidential adviser—a sort of privileged character at the court. He was also my tutor in the old days.”

“What do you think he is here for?”

“Something unpleasant you may be sure—something concerning that deuced row of the other day. We must be careful to treat the old gentleman well, though. He is not a bad old fellow, and besides he is a sort of ‘power behind the throne.’”

Without further delay Raoul Alexander repairs to the room where Baron von Bieler is awaiting him. Upon his entrance, the Baron, an old gentleman of courtly manners, but of somewhat austere mien, rises to greet him.

Raoul Alexander receives him with words of formal welcome, and on his side Baron von Bieler is as suave of manner as if he were not in the least conscious of the uneasiness to which his sudden appearance has undoubtedly given rise. Beneath a certain air of official ceremoniousness and cold austerity, he at heart really loves this heir apparent to the throne, in whom he always more than half sees the wild, impetuous, mischievous boy—his old-time pupil of twenty odd years ago.

“Do not fear that I bring you ill tidings from home,” he says, reassuringly. “On the contrary, I left all the members of the Royal family in the

best of health. They bade me convey to you their affectionate greetings."

"Thanks," drawls Raoul Alexander. "But," with a suspicious smile, "I doubt that you have spent two days and nights in a railway carriage simply to bear me that message. I strongly suspect there is something more—something that is probably not so pleasant to hear."

"You are right," answers Baron von Bieler, still serene as ever. "I *am* charged with another message. It is an order to you to return at once."

"To return at once!" cries Raoul Alexander, in dismay. "Oh, no; I really cannot do that."

"It is the King's order!" says Baron von Bieler, impressively.

Raoul Alexander is silent for an instant, in despair.

"But," he protests, at last, "what need can there possibly be for my presence at court just at this time? I cannot see any necessity for my return in such haste."

"It is by order of His Majesty, the King!" repeats Baron von Bieler, more impressively than ever.

"Yes; so I understand," retorts Raoul Alex-

ander, with some asperity. "Still, this sudden decision greatly inconveniences me. It interferes with a number of plans. Having really nothing to do with affairs of state," he continues, with marked dissatisfaction, "I cannot see why I am not left to enjoy myself in peace."

"It is precisely your Highness' methods of enjoyment that have brought about this matter," says Baron von Bieler, in a confidential tone. "There appears to be a certain husband in Paris who strongly objects to one direction in which your Highness is pleased to amuse himself—objects so strongly, in fact, that the royal name you bear is in danger of being brought into unpleasant prominence in the courts of law. Neither the government of France, nor our own, desires that. The French government, deeming a public scandal in which high personages are involved to be against the interests of its present policy, has sought by every means in its power to avert this threatened publicity, but without success. It has, therefore, formally requested your temporary recall."

"The French government asks that I be recalled!" cries Raoul Alexander, dumfounded.

By way of answer, Baron von Bieler hands him a package of confidential dispatches and reports

which have passed between the French Foreign Office and the Prime Minister of H——. A few hasty glances quickly verify the accuracy of Baron von Bieler's statements. The French government has, indeed, requested a recall—very politely, and with a great deal of diplomatic delicacy, but very unmistakably for all that! It is, however, the answer rendered to this request by the Prime Minister of H—— that specially arouses Raoul Alexander's ire.

“Permit me to tender you the assurance,” writes the Prime Minister, uncompromisingly, “that the Prince shall at once receive instructions to withdraw.”

“Instructions to withdraw! The impudence of the thing!” thinks Raoul Alexander to himself angrily. “Of what use, indeed, to be a Royal Highness if a miserable plebeian of a prime minister, lifted into temporary prominence by a paltry majority of the votes of the masses, has the power to talk about ‘instructions to withdraw.’ How he will put a curb on these democratic tendencies when he comes to the throne! Just wait and see!”

“So the Prime Minister,” he says aloud, and with sarcastic emphasis, “undertakes to send me *instructions to withdraw.*”

"As I have said," answers Baron von Bieler, coldly, "the order comes from His Majesty, the King."

'Ah!'

"And in accordance with this summons which I am charged to bear to you," continues the royal secretary, "you are directed to set out for the capital within twenty-four hours."

"Twenty-four hours!" cries Raoul Alexander, with indignation.

"Within twenty-four hours," repeats Baron von Bieler, coolly. "There is a train leaving in the morning and another late in the afternoon. Upon which of these will it please your Highness to leave?"

"I will send you word in the morning!" answers Raoul Alexander, almost too angry to be able to articulate distinctly.

The royal secretary takes no perceptible notice of the Prince's wrath. He is an old servant of royalty, yielding a blind obedience to the will of his master, the King. To him that will is final. That there should be any open rebellion to it, he cannot for a moment admit.

With the same official dignity and calm imperturbability that have characterized his bearing

throughout, he brings the interview to a close and takes his leave.

Raoul Alexander at once rejoins Baron Barr and acquaints him with the nature of the royal secretary's mission.

"And what do you propose to do?" inquires the Baron, quietly.

"What can I do?" cries Raoul Alexander, "I can't remain here."

"Here, no; for under the circumstances the French government might consider it undesirable to harbor you and might have you quietly conducted to the frontier by a file of gendarmes." And the Baron laughs softly, as if greatly enjoying this possible situation.

"What is open to me, then?" cries Raoul Alexander, angrily.

"It seems to me that two courses are open—to obey, or not to obey."

"And suppose I don't obey, what then?"

"Then, I should advise a withdrawal to a more friendly territory, and from there I would enter into a very extended and very diplomatic negotiation on the subject. There is nothing like gaining time in matters of this kind."

"Where would you go?" asks Raoul Alexander, with interest.

"We had, I think," suggests the Baron, "arranged to go to London and attend the American Minister's ball?"

"Yes."

"Well," continues the Baron, "why disturb our plans? London is a convenient point from which to negotiate diplomatically, and there you can also see again your fair American."

Raoul Alexander does not hesitate another instant :

"*Mon cher*, you are a genius!" he cries. "We will leave to-night."

"I thought the pretty American would carry the day," laughs Baron Barr, to himself. "She may congratulate herself. She is more mighty than the King!"

BOOK II.

UNDER FALSE COLORS.

CHAPTER I.

THE AMERICAN MINISTER'S BALL.

"HOW beautiful! I don't believe I've ever seen anything quite so nice as this—so many people, such a gay blending of colors, so many glorious diamonds, such dresses, such music, such flowers!" and Edith Hepworth, flushed with excitement and at a loss for words to express her enthusiasm, looks with flashing eyes at her old school friend, formerly Helen Austin, of Chicago, now Mrs. Herbert Scott-Murray, wife of Captain Scott-Murray, of the Second Life Guards.

It is the ball of the American Minister, an event of unusual social importance this year in London society. It is a long time since an American Minister at the Court of St. James has shown any particular qualifications of a social nature, and this Minister, recently appointed by the new Administration and the descendant of an almost sacred figure in American history, has

already given indications of a social aptitude and knowledge found sadly wanting in his immediate predecessors. London society in general, and the so-called "American colony" in London in particular, have responded, therefore, with marked unanimity to the invitations sent out. Society is eager to test the quality of the new Minister's hospitality; society is anxious to verify these reports as to his social prowess, and determine how substantial a foundation they have in fact.

On his side, the Minister seems to have spared no effort to make his first big entertainment a pronounced success. All that the art of the florist and the expert decorator can effect in ball-room and conservatories has been accomplished, and the scene presented is a truly brilliant one. The vast ball-room of this roomy London mansion almost suggests a glimpse into fairy land. The big mirrors lining the walls, and decorated with broad borders of smilax and roses, catch the shafts of light reflected from the great crystal pendants of the chandeliers and flash them back in myriad scintillations; musicians, concealed from view in floral arbors, discourse the choicest selections of Strauss and Metra and Waldteufel; tropical plants fill the conservato-

ries and line both sides of the broad main staircase.

The rooms, as is usual on such occasions, are almost uncomfortably crowded, but the throng is unquestionably composed of the very *élite* of London society. Seated on one of the red velvet stools ranged along the walls of the ball-room, Edith Hepworth is contemplating the brilliant scene before her ; and her friend, in the light of her three seasons experience in London, is seeking to initiate her into some of the secrets of this society.

"Yes, dear," she says, "it is very brilliant ; in fact, notably so, even for here. I don't think I remember in a long time any entertainment at which so many really distinguished people were gathered together. We shall feel quite proud of our new Minister. It is time we did, for we have had reason enough to be ashamed of some of the others."

"How lovely it must be to live here and enjoy things of this kind all the time," cries Edith, carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment.

"Well," answers Helen, conservatively, "one gets used to it in time, and once the novelty is gone, much of the illusion is gone, too. It is cer-

tainly more pretentious, more brilliant, if you like, than anything we have in Chicago, but I don't know that it's any more enjoyable, after all."

"Why, then, do so many American girls marry into European society?"

"Because, my dear, a great many American girls do not know what is good for themselves, and not a few of them subsequently live to regret that they did not marry at home, and remain there."

"Are there many American women here to-night?"

"Yes, quite a number; although it would be difficult for you to pick them out, for the average American woman in London society becomes more European in her ideas and manners than the natives themselves."

"Can it be possible! Still, I suppose all you Americans in London have a sort of fellow feeling toward one another, coming as you do from a common country."

"Not by any means, my dear. To tell the truth, the bitterest jealousies and rivalries exist among the American women in society in London; and in pursuit of the enmities that have

been engendered nothing seems too mean, too wicked for some of them to resort to. But I don't want to give you a bad impression from the start. I won't say anything more about that, but will simply point out to you some of your well-known countrywomen and tell you something of their histories."

"Do, please," exclaims Edith, with interest.

Just at that moment the band breaks forth into one of Strauss' waltzes—one of those delicious refrains that cause every nerve to throb and thrill with pleasurable emotion—and amid this burst of melody Helen bends her lips closer to Edith's ear to be the better heard.

"You see that lady there," she says, in strongly emphasized whispers, while the music wells out its passionate rhythm and the dancers turn and sway before them, "the lady, I mean, with the magnificent necklace of pearls—a necklace which is famous, and has often been aptly described as worth a king's ransom. Now is your chance—now look! You can hardly see her well, there are so many attentive courtiers around her. Well, I need hardly tell you who she is. You have, of course, recognized her; she is so well known on both sides of the Atlantic. She is the

real leader of the American colony here, and she well deserves that rank, for she not only has the means to entertain magnificently, but she also has the necessary experience and brains to properly manage great social entertainments. Her daughter, you know, is a Princess, married to the representative of one of the oldest princely houses in the world, and she herself has won widespread fame alike in Paris and in London as a great society queen. She is a woman of whom we Americans have good reason to be proud."

"She must be very happy," murmurs Edith, gazing with admiration alike at the lady and the pearls.

"She ought to be," answers Helen, "and yet even this lady is not free from the attacks of spiteful enemies who are envious of her popularity and success."

"But what can these enemies do to affect a lady of her high position?" asks Edith.

"A great many things. You have no idea of the outrageous and cowardly methods of warfare sometimes resorted to in high society. Just imagine: the enemies of this lady have at repeated intervals assailed her through bought up articles in venal newspapers—articles in which

the most ridiculous stories are circulated concerning her career in days when she was not wealthy as she is now. These attacks are all the more wanton in view of the fact that she is one of the few women prominent in London society against whom there has never been even a breath of scandal."

"One of the *few*!" exclaims Edith.

At this moment Mr. Halstead, who has secured leave of absence from the Legation in Paris to attend the London ball, comes to claim Edith for a *schottische* promised him, and Helen also goes off on the arm of a tall cavalier, one of her husband's brother officers in the Guards. The dance over and the two ladies finding themselves once more side by side, Edith re-opens the conversation just where it was broken off.

"One of the few!" she repeats.

Helen glances at her for a moment at a loss to understand, and then recollecting, resumes the thread of her discourse.

"Yes, one of the few," she answers. "The thought has often occurred to me that the two extremes of society—the very high and the very low—strongly resemble each other in certain respects. If you wish to find real respectability

and genuine virtue prevailing as the general rule you must go to what is termed the 'middle class.' Outrageous cases of immorality, husbands leading shameless lives of profligacy and wives shamelessly betraying their husbands' honor, with the fact more than half known to the husband himself, are comparatively rare in this great middle class. For that kind of thing you must go—where? Either to the very lowest or the very highest levels of society."

"And is high society in Europe really as corrupt as all that?"

"For your answer, my dear, I must refer you to the daily newspapers, which you as an American girl doubtless conscientiously read. You must, consequently, have seen from time to time scandal after scandal in which persons of this so-called highest class were directly involved. And what scandals! Where were such happenings ever heard of except, as I have said, in the very highest or the very lowest circles of social life?"

"But how does that affect our American women here?"

"High society is to-day fearfully profligate and, as I have already told you, the average American woman in society here becomes more

European than the *Européenne* herself. The zeal of converts is proverbial! My statement that there are comparatively few women in London society whose names are untainted by any breath of scandal is strictly true."

"That sounds dreadful!" exclaims Edith, shocked.

"I will give you a couple of instances. You see that lady there, talking to the small, dark gentleman with the ribbon of the *Legion d'honneur* in his button-hole? Well, she is the daughter of a well-known New York society woman, famous for her numerous eccentricities. A certain lord, the descendant of a man famous for his letters to his nephew on the conduct becoming a gentleman, is openly spoken of as her lover. That tall, stately-looking lady, with the Spanish cast of features, who has just passed us, is connected by marriage with probably the wealthiest family in all America. She married some years ago a debauched English nobleman, to-day a peer of the realm, who on account of his vices has become so poverty-stricken that he is unable to even support her. She, however, is socially ambitious and of expensive tastes, and the money has to come from somewhere. What is the result? It

is whispered on all sides that her establishment is maintained by the contributions of a certain eminent Hebrew financier, famous for his gallantries. The noble husband makes no protest, his time being largely taken up with a vulgar music hall singer."

"And society tolerates her?"

"Evidently, since she is here to-night. As long as there is no open scandal, no violent and public infraction of the proprieties, high society is only too willing to close its eyes. I could give you a number of other instances, but I don't want to shock you too utterly," and Helen breaks into a pleasant little laugh.

"Helen," whispers Edith, "I think, after all, I should prefer our Chicago society."

"In spite of the divorces!" laughs Helen. "Well, perhaps I was wrong, dear, to show up the seamy side so strongly. By the way, you have by the merest chance missed seeing quite a famous personage—a Royal Highness and an heir apparent to a throne."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; His Royal Highness, Prince Raoul Alexander of H——, was, I understand, to have been here to-night, but he has doubtless been

forced into temporary retirement by that scandal which has just broken out. You saw it in this afternoon's newspapers, no doubt."

"No."

"The Comte de Vigny has begun an action for divorce against the Countess, and it is rumored that the Prince is at the bottom of the trouble. As a result, His Royal Highness will have to go into at least temporary retirement, for, you know, society does not approve of these affairs when they make a noise. He will soon emerge from his seclusion, though, and be forgiven. Society cannot long deal harshly with a Royal Highness."

"Why not?"

"These exalted personages have their special privileges. Besides, we have here in England grown so used to overlooking the offences of our own princes of the blood that it would be most inconsistent to deal severely with a foreign one. I am sorry, though, you did not have the opportunity of seeing this Prince Raoul Alexander. He is a decidedly handsome man, and a famous gallant. If you had had the honor of being presented to him—you know *we* are presented to these royal princes, not they to us—you, with that pretty face and really perfect figure, would

doubtless have been favored with some of the boldest wooing it has ever been your lot to experience."

"Would such a man really dare—upon a first meeting?" exclaims Edith.

"Dare!" rejoins Helen. "I can assure you that Prince Raoul Alexander, if the stories told of him be only half true, would dare anything. You will get used to bold—very bold—flirtations before you have been long in high society in Europe. The Prince is of the boldest of the bold, and his confidence in himself is justified by his many conquests."

"Look, Helen," whispers Edith, "there is Mr. William Hanley Gardiner. Aunt Kate knows him and we met him several times in Paris."

"Yes," answers Helen, "and that gentleman with him is no less a personage than Baron Barr, the friend of Prince Raoul Alexander of whom we were just speaking. Ah, they have seen us. They are coming this way, I think."

Helen's surmise is correct, for an instant later Mr. Gardiner is standing before them, bowing low and presenting his companion, Baron Barr. Mr. Gardiner solicits from Helen the honor of a waltz and, she accepting, Edith accedes to a like re-

quest from the Baron. The latter proves himself to be a superb waltzer, one who understands so to waltz his partner that she feels as she were treading on lightest air. His clasp of her waist during the more rapid whirls of the dance is a trifle too emphasized, an admiring glance which he casts upon her open corsage a trifle too bold, but much may be forgiven a partner who knows how to waltz exquisitely and who talks with decided brilliancy and dash.

The waltz over he leads her back to her seat and, bending over her, continues their conversation.

“My friend, His Royal Highness Prince Raoul Alexander,” he says, presently, “had the pleasure of seeing you at the opera in Paris. He is, unfortunately, prevented by—ah—important state affairs from being here to-night. He will greatly regret missing this opportunity of a presentation.”

Edith suddenly remembers the words of her friend Helen. A bold gallant, this Prince—and one whose confidence in himself is justified by his many conquests! The latent assumption in Baron Barr’s tone that she, too, must feel equally regretful over this lost opportunity strikes her sharply at the moment, and her republi-

can blood suddenly surges up hotly in revolt.

"I am not at all sorry," she answers, deliberately, "that the Prince is not here. I do not think I should care to meet him."

Baron Barr looks at her closely for an instant, in surprise; then a smile crosses his face, and he skilfully turns the conversation. He continues talking to her until Mr. Halstead comes to claim her for a quadrille.

"What do you think of the Baron?" whispers Helen to her, when some time later they again find themselves alone together.

"A beautiful waltzer, very bright and very clever, but—a great deal too bold."

Helen laughs.

"You will get used to that," she answers. "You ought to have met the Prince."

"I do not care to," rejoins Edith, "and I told the Baron so."

Helen looks at her aghast.

"You don't mean it!" she cries. "Well, you certainly have sustained the reputation of the American girl for outspoken frankness. But, I'm afraid the Baron will never speak to you again."

"Not at all," replies Edith. "You know we are going in a few days to Bordighera. And, what do you think! the Baron goes there, too. Is it not a strange coincidence!"

* * * * *

It is well into the night when Baron Barr returns from the American Minister's ball to the apartments in Piccadilly where Raoul Alexander is temporarily stopping. The latter, prevented by the sudden outbreak of the Paris scandal from attending the ball, is not in the best of temper. He is lying on a sofa smoking and reading a French novel as the Baron enters.

"Well?" he mutters, curtly.

"I have seen your American charmer and have been presented to her," cries the Baron, gayly, "and I have a surprise for you."

"A surprise!"

"Yes; she utterly discountenances your Highness' proposed attentions; in plain words, she wants nothing to do with your Highness."

"What!" cries Raoul Alexander, amazed.

"Miss Edith Zelma Hepworth, of Chicago, does not care to make the acquaintance of His Royal Highness, Prince Raoul Alexander!"

In response to Raoul Alexander's eager ques-

tioning, the Baron narrates his experiences and the conversation which has passed.

"Well," cries His Highness, with a laugh, "we must bring this fair republican rebel to terms. If the Prince cannot vanquish her, let us see what the *man* can do," and Raoul Alexander looks complacently at his comely personality as reflected in the mirrors.

"All the more credit in the conquest, then," exclaims the Baron.

"But how about the opportunity?"

"It is here at hand," cries the Baron. "Her estimable aunt, it appears, has caught a severe cold—she was not at the ball to-night—and the doctors have advised her to try for a time a milder climate. As a result of this advice, she and the niece are going to Bordighera."

"Bordighera?"

"Yes; a little village in the Riviera, not far from Monte Carlo. If you wish, we can go there, too. You will, of course, travel for the present incognito, and from there we might patch up this trouble with your authorities at home. You might figure as my brother—my younger brother, Baron Alexander Barr—if it so please your Highness, and in that role make her ac-

quaintance. I have already told her I am bound for the Riviera and have asked her permission to call."

"But," remarks Raoul Alexander, with some hesitation, "will it not be rather a—a—queer proceeding to figure in an assumed character?"

"Is it not a royal privilege," retorts the Baron, "to travel *incog.*? Bordighera is not Paris, and you are not likely just at this time of the year to meet anybody there who will recognize you."

Raoul Alexander ponders for a moment over the proposed plan.

"Dear brother," he cries, turning with a laugh to the Baron, "let us go to Bordighera—and lay siege."

CHAPTER II.

THE WITCH'S CAVE.

THE furnished villa which Mrs. Patterson has rented for herself and her niece at Bordighera is a well-built, two-story structure, standing in its own grounds, and situated in one of the most desirable parts of the village. Mrs. Patterson and Edith are both well pleased with their surroundings, and under the influence of the balmy Riviera climate the former finds herself rapidly recovering from what threatened to be a serious chest trouble.

"You are sure you are not bored here, my dear?" asks Mrs. Patterson one day, about a week after their arrival, as, seated on the well-shaded piazza, they are enjoying the soft, limpid air, and admiring the deep azure beauty of the skies above them. "I am afraid it is almost too quiet for you. This trip to Europe was to be a pleasure trip, and I would not for the world have you miss enjoying yourself."

"Enjoy myself, auntie!" exclaims Edith, with

energy, "I don't see how any human being with an eye to the beautiful could help enjoying themselves here. Such skies, such air, such beauty all around one!"

"Yes," assents Mrs. Patterson, in turn affected by Edith's enthusiasm. "I can hardly imagine how even heaven can be more beautiful. Still, young women, I know, generally require something more than mere natural beauty. They want society, movement, life."

"We can hardly complain of lack of society," answers Edith, demurely. "Have we not Baron Barr, and his brother, Baron Alexander? They surely are a sufficient safeguard against being dull!" she adds, smiling.

"Two very charming young men," replies Mrs. Patterson, "and both so brimful of life and spirits that it does one good to see them. By the way, my dear, I think Baron Alexander is very much impressed."

"Impressed?"

"Yes."

"Impressed with what, auntie?" asks Edith, innocently.

"Why, with you, dear, of course," replies Mrs. Patterson, bluntly. "With what else would you

have a young bachelor impressed when a beautiful young woman is around?"

"Oh, auntie!" cries Edith, a faint flush of color rising to her cheeks. "Just because they have been a little pleasant and—and—attentive."

"I flatter myself," answers Mrs. Patterson, with western directness, "that I understand what a young man's attentions mean. I know what that kind of thing would indicate in Chicago, and I presume human nature is not so very different here from what it is there. I say Baron Alexander is decidedly smitten."

Edith makes no answer to this, and Mrs. Patterson lapses into meditation.

She is a good-natured, large-hearted woman, not over-refined, perhaps,—for the force of association will tell, and the late Mr. Patterson was blessed with more ability in the line of money-making than in the direction of social ethics—but well-meaning and solicitous to the highest degree of her niece's comfort and enjoyment. Two fads she has. The one, a belief that she is of frail constitution and constantly ailing; the other, a desire to see her niece, Edith, who is her heir, she having no children, make a brilliant match.

While in Chicago, her ideas on this latter subject had shaped themselves in the direction of some young man of great wealth and high position, either in the social, financial or political worlds. Since the beginning of this European trip, however, the suggestion has vaguely presented itself to her mind that, perhaps, after all, a match might be contracted on this side of the water, which would eclipse anything possible in America. Why should not Edith do as seems so much the fashion among American girls to-day—contract one of those international alliances which would make her the wife of the titled descendant of some noble old European house? How pleasant it would be to refer before her friends in Chicago to my niece, Lady so and so, or my niece, the Baroness this and that! Since coming to Bordighera, and meeting these two young nobleman, these reflections have cropped up more sharply and more persistently than ever. They seemed such really desirable young men! Baron Barr, too, had brought her letters of introduction from a prominent American society woman in London, who spoke of him as belonging to one of the best families in France.

Her ideas in this direction, however, she refrains from explaining to Edith who, if anything appears to be of rather a democratic turn of mind, with no perceptible ambition whatever in the direction of making an aristocratic alliance. The girl, in fact, has evidently only one idea—to see all the new sights in these foreign lands and gather all the enjoyment she can out of them. She seems to be pleased, entertained, amused by what she sees, but not dazzled, and to have at the bottom of her mind an idea that America is, after all, the greatest and the best of all the countries on the face of this earth.

“How do you like him?” asks Mrs. Patterson, suddenly.

“Whom, Auntie?” asks Edith, feigning not to understand.

“Baron Alexander, of course.”

“I like him better than I liked his brother the first time I met him,” is Edith’s non-committal answer.

“Oh, yes; at the American Minister’s ball! You did not like the Baron the first time you met him?”

“No; I thought him somewhat too—too—bold,” answers Edith, “but,” with a laugh, “he

seems to be toned down, so to speak, by comparison with his big brother."

"Personally," declares Mrs. Patterson, meditatively, "I like big men, and between the two, although they are both very charming, my choice as a young girl, I know, would have gone out to the younger brother, Baron Alexander."

"Baron Alexander," laughs Edith, "who has such funny ideas about America! What do you think he asked me the other day? If we were much 'troubled by the savages' in Chicago! Is it not singular, though," she continues, "that of these two brothers, the one is so fair and the other so dark?"

"You often find that in families," declares Mrs. Patterson, sagely.

"I don't see the slightest likeness between them."

"No," murmurs Mrs. Patterson, "Baron Alexander is certainly much the handsomer of the two, although both have a certain air, a certain ease that belongs to the true gentleman. Don't you find, dear, that the men in Europe are somewhat more courtly, more polished, than ours at home?"

"In manners and in bearing, perhaps yes,"

answers Edith, slowly, "but it seems to me that beneath it all there lurks a certain falseness, a certain lack of sincerity. I think, upon the whole, that I would often prefer to put my trust in the homelier mannered man."

"Still, that grand air has its attraction. By the way, Edith, are not our friends to call this afternoon?"

"Yes; they were to come and we were to go out riding. Ah, here is the groom, now, with my horse!" exclaims Edith, looking down the winding road. "Shall I go, auntie, and put on my riding habit?"

"Yes, dear, I would. It might be well, by way of a novelty," she adds, smiling, "not to keep these gentlemen waiting too long."

"I thought one of the first duties of a gallant cavalier was to learn how to wait," is Edith's laughing answer, as she trips across the veranda and disappears in the house.

Left alone, Mrs. Patterson sits watching the groom as he canters up leading the horse Edith is to ride. He is an English groom whom, in accordance with the advice of her London friends, Mrs. Patterson has engaged before leaving England—one of those typical English grooms with

ruddy cheeks and trim figure, looking very neat and alert in his natty livery.

“Ah,” thinks Mrs. Patterson, as the man, touching his hat, dismounts before the house and stands, stiff as a ramrod, holding the two horses; “they certainly understand how to train and dress their servants over here a good deal better than we do. Just look at that man beside our Tom, in Chicago!”

At this point, however, Mrs. Patterson’s further reflections on the servant question are interrupted by the noise of clattering hoofs as two horsemen, magnificently mounted, appear around a turn in the road. An instant later they have drawn rein in front of the house and Baron Barr, accompanied by Raoul Alexander in the role of the former’s younger brother, are at her side.

Both the gentlemen bow low before her; each in turn inquires, with an air of the deepest solicitude, regarding her health; as to how she enjoys the climate; how she finds the air agrees with her—to which little attentions Mrs. Patterson, like most middle-aged ladies, is by no means impervious. She answers in a eulogistic strain. The climate is agreeing with her wonderfully. She notes a marked improvement in her health! She

finds everything simply perfection! Thus the conversation shapes itself until Edith, in her riding habit, makes her appearance on the veranda.

"I suppose that even in America you hardly have such a climate as this, Miss Hepworth?" ventures Baron Barr, politely.

"Except, perhaps, in California," answers Edith, with a patriotic disinclination to admit that America is behind any other land in anything.

"Ah, in California!" interposes the *soi-disant* Baron Alexander. "So you have such a magnificent climate in California? I suppose you often run over there from Chicago?"

"Run over there from Chicago?" repeats Edith, bewildered.

"Yes; is it far?"

"Almost a couple of thousand miles," answers Edith, calmly.

"A couple of thousand miles!" is the astonished exclamation of Raoul Alexander, who realizes he has blundered.

Baron Barr looks at his companion, a faint smile lurking in the corners of his mouth. In spite of his best efforts, he has been unable to

instil any adequate knowledge as to the geography of the United States into his companion's head.

"What splendid horses!" cries Edith, looking at the animals upon which the gentlemen have just ridden up.

Her praise is well deserved. They are, indeed, two magnificent mounts, which have arrived only the day before from Raoul Alexander's stables in Paris.

"Where shall we ride to-day?" continues Edith.

"I would suggest we take the Monte Falerno road," answers Baron Barr. "We shall see some magnificent scenery, and if Miss Hepworth is willing, we can visit the fortune teller's cave which lies just off the road near the little village of Valecci."

"A fortune teller's cave!" exclaims Edith. "That sounds very romantic and interesting. I should love to go."

"The girl is really wonderful," declares Baron Barr. "I visited her the other day and she certainly astonished me."

"What does she do?"

"It would be unfair to tell in advance,"

laughs Baron Barr. "Is it not better to wait and judge for yourself?"

"Very well," cries Edith, gayly. "But I warn you, though, I am burning with curiosity, and shall want to gallop all the way there."

She walks down the gravelled garden path to the gate and, with Raoul Alexander's assistance, springs lightly into the saddle. An instant later, with a parting salutation to Mrs. Patterson, the party is cantering along the road, with Edith's groom at the regulation distance in the rear.

The road winds its way in easy, graceful curves past handsome villas set in flower-decked lawns; past quaint, pretty cottages with flowering vines clambering to their low roof-trees from the gardens that surround them; out into the open country with its green fields, its distant hills and mountains more distant still. Each new turn in the road discloses a new scene of beauty that draws from Edith fresh exclamations of delight.

"You enjoy this scenery?" asks Raoul Alexander, as he bends toward her across his horse's mane.

"Enjoy it!" she exclaims. "Do not you enjoy everything that is beautiful?"

"Yes."

He gives only this simple assent, but he utters it with such slow, deep earnestness that Edith raises her eyes to his and meets a look that sends a strange thrill through her. Her face is already flushed with the glow of exhilarating exercise, but she feels the flush deepen. Her eyes lower, she gives a sharp swish with her whip and her horse springs forward a full length ahead of Raoul Alexander's. For the moment she has ceased to think of the scenery.

Baron Barr looks on with an amused, cynical smile. To him it is all a very diverting little bit of comedy.

A minute later, the three horses are again cantering in line together, and with the clattering of their hoofs, mingle the merry, laughing voices of their riders.

A turn of the road discloses the low, vine-clad cottages of Valecci to view.

"Where is your witch's cave?" asked Edith, turning to Baron Barr. "We must be near her dread abode."

"We are," he replies, and a moment later he leads the way into a sort of bridle path off the road.

The path is bordered on either side by a thick

growth of trees whose tangled branches shut out the sun's rays. Entering it from the light and brightness of the broad highway, its shade creates an impression of gloom.

They have advanced but a short distance when they see rising among the trees a huge mass of rocks, from an opening in the centre of which juts a rude, wooden porch. On coming nearer, it is seen that in this natural cave, created by the cleft in the rocks, there has been built a small hut.

In this hut lives "the witch"—this is The Witch's Cave.

The horses have just come to a halt, when there appears under the little porch a tall, gaunt man with long, white hair and flowing beard. He turns upon his visitors a pair of dark, piercing eyes, and recognizing Baron Barr as one whom he has seen before, he bids him welcome.

Baron Barr dismounts, and Raoul Alexander quickly follows his example, immediately offering his aid to Edith in alighting. Together they approach the old man, and as they do so there appears at his side a girl, seemingly not more than eighteen of age. She has fair, flaxen hair, falling in long braids, eyes of a pale

blue, a face almost waxen in its pallor, and a slight form, of medium height, clad in a simple, cotton gown. On her wrists are heavy gold bracelets wrought in curious design, and in her ears heavy golden rings graven of the same pattern.

An ordinary girl, this, at first glance, but upon closer scrutiny one is impressed by her strange pallor, by the automatic way in which she moves, by the lack of expression in the face; above all, by the fixed, vacant look in the eyes. Not the vacant look of the blind, for she evidently sees the material objects around her, but it is as if she not only sees them, but sees into them and through them and beholds something not visible to the ordinary eye.

And this is "the witch!"

Whether she is the daughter, the grand-daughter, or bears any relationship whatever to this old man, who ever refers to her as the "Seeress," no one about the country seems to know, nor is it known whence he or she have come.

Baron Barr informs the old man that they wish to consult the "Seeress," and Raoul Alexander having, in accordance with his request, gone through the customary ceremony of "crossing her palm with gold," takes a seat

under the porch, while the others gather about him.

The old man stands in front of the girl, places his hand upon her brow, and looks down into her eyes with a fixed, continuous gaze. He makes no motion, speaks no word, but as his eyes remain fixed upon hers, her head sinks back, all life seems to die out of her face, all light out of her eyes.

She looks as ghastly as one dead.

So weird, so uncanny is the appearance she presents, that a feeling of fear comes over Edith, and she would yield to her impulse to hastily withdraw were she not ashamed to thus openly betray her cowardice.

In obedience to the old man's directions, Raoul Alexander takes the girl's hand in his.

"Think of some scene, some place that comes clearly, very clearly, to your mind," whispers the old man, his eyes fixed upon the girl.

Raoul Alexander, not much impressed by the proceedings, and believing he is about to go through the very ordinary process of having his fortune told, pays little heed to these instructions. At the moment his mind is to a goodly extent filled with thoughts as to two letters forwarded

to him from London, and received that morning, the one from the King, and the other from the Prime Minister of H——, both of whom seem disposed to take a very serious view of his failure to obey the summons to return. The contents of these letters have somewhat troubled him. As he declares to Baron Barr, he foresees “a good deal of bother ahead.” And, on general principles, Raoul Alexander hates “bother” of any kind.

For some moments the girl continues holding Raoul Alexander’s hand, without any change taking place in the listlessness of her attitude. Suddenly, however, she stirs slightly, and the pupils of her eyes begin to dilate. An instant later her lips part, and from them comes a voice as from a distance, yet the words are very distinct.

“I see,” she murmurs, “a large and beautiful palace. It looks like a king’s palace. . . . A carriage is coming along the road. It passes through the gates and is in the great courtyard now. See! the soldiers are turning out and presenting arms. . . . A man has stepped from the carriage. He is tall and thin, and dressed in black, and there is bright ribbon at his breast. His face is hard and cold. He ascends the broad

stairway of the palace, and men in uniforms and costumes of strange colors fall back in deep respect. 'The Prime Minister,' they whisper. . .

"And now he has passed on and on and on, through great rooms with beautiful pictures and ornaments, and little statues upon marble columns, and he is talking to an old man with white hair and white beard, and a great look of care in his face. . . . 'Your Majesty,' he is saying, 'I have come to present to you the report I have obtained of the whereabouts and movements of His Royal Highness, the heir apparent. . . . After leaving Paris he went to London, where he remained but a short time. Thence, under the name of—'

For some minutes past, Raoul Alexander has been gazing at the girl with widely opened eyes, curiously fascinated, strangely spell-bound. At this point, however, with almost rude energy, he suddenly wrenches his hand from her, and drops back a step.

Baron Barr looks at him sharply, warningly.

"Take care—take care!" whispers the old man, cautioningly. "Beware how you shock her thus suddenly!"

The instant Raoul Alexander's hand has left hers, the girl has ceased speaking, and seems to be rapidly developing symptoms of great lassitude and fatigue.

The old man makes several rapid passes before her face, but no change manifests itself in the girl's appearance.

"No use," he murmurs, presently. "You have disturbed the influence. I fear I cannot again bring her into communication with you—at least, not to-day."

"I am sorry," answers Raoul Alexander, "that a sudden twinge of neuralgia should have interrupted the—ah—seance. I am subject to these sudden sharp twinges, though, and they are very painful, I can assure you. Do you not wish," he continues, turning to Edith, "to try her?"

Edith hesitates.

"Let her tell you your fortune, lady," urges the old man, with a sign to Raoul Alexander to again cross the girl's palm with gold.

With perceptible reluctance, Edith puts her hand within the girl's. The old man, apparently somewhat annoyed by the failure to complete the "seance" in Raoul Alexander's case, motions to the latter.

"You too," he whispers, "you too join hands, and she can then choose for which one she will speak."

It is Raoul Alexander's turn to hesitate.

"Are you afraid?" asks Edith, with a slight smile.

Instantly Raoul Alexander steps forward and extends his hand.

As before, the girl is motionless for a time, and then the pupils of her eyes begin to grow larger. She shudders several times, and the old man, watching her intently, seems somewhat puzzled.

Suddenly, into the "seeress'" face there comes a look of fear and horror. Her eyes glare wildly before her, her features begin to work convulsively, and then from her disturbed lips comes one prolonged, fearful, uncanny scream, and as Edith, dismayed and pale, starts away, she sinks writhing to the ground.

Quickly the old man bends over her, and with a few long, sweeping, downward passes, manages to restore her to comparative calmness.

"That is bad—bad," he croons to himself, as he proceeds with his work.

"What was it—what was the matter?" asks Edith, not yet recovered from her alarm.

"A bad omen, lady—a bad omen!" croaks the old man; but anything more explicit it seems impossible to glean from him.

"When she wakes can we not learn what she saw?" inquires Edith.

"No," answers the old man, "no, lady. She will remember nothing."

"Let us go," whispers Edith, still agitated by the experience, turning to her companions.

In obedience to her wish, they immediately remount, and start on the return to Bordighera. During the ride back, Edith still seems under the influence of the experience through which she has passed. Her merry laughter no longer rings out, and she takes little part in the conversation her companions attempt to keep up.

"I wonder what 'the witch' can have seen!" remarks Baron Barr to Raoul Alexander, as they ride slowly home in the twilight.

Raoul Alexander turns in his saddle and looks into his companion's face.

"That was a remarkable experience—decidedly remarkable," he answers, deliberately.

"Yes," rejoins the Baron, "and, by the way, that was a narrow escape you had on the question of identity."

"A narrow escape, indeed!" replies Raoul Alexander. "Another word might have spoiled everything. That would have been too bad."

"You think so?"

"Think so? Yes! I tell you I never in my life had a more violent fancy."

"Well; she would have found a prince, and I should have lost a brother."

"Thank you. I don't care for any such surprises—not, at least, for the present. Later, perhaps," and Raoul Alexander smiles meaningly, "ah, it may be different!"

CHAPTER III.

A PAGE FROM HISTORY.

THE kingdom, to the throne of which Raoul Alexander is the heir presumptive, borders upon two great states, either one of which would have absorbed it long ago had it not been for the jealous opposition of the other.

The two great states in question had never been able to arrive at a satisfactory understanding as to just upon what basis should be arranged the partition of this little kingdom between them, each being in mortal dread lest one should get more out of the bargain than the other. The sovereigns, too, of other states took a malicious delight in interfering in the question. Not that this matter of annexation affected their respective interests in the least, or that they were in the least concerned as to whether this particular people maintained their national autonomy or not ; but then, actuated by sentiments similar to those inspiring the traditional dog in the manger, they could not bear to see neighbors enjoy-

ing a fat bone of which they were to get no part.

“Take this bit of country by all means,” the head of this or that government would announce practically and in substance; “but for heaven’s sake! cede to us this island, or that colony, if you expect us to keep quiet on the subject. Do this, or there will be trouble!”

And so it was that at times during the past few decades the question of the partition, or non-partition of this little kingdom had been a burning question in European politics. So much discord had been engendered on the subject, in fact, that at different periods hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of armed men had been gathered on various frontiers, prepared to shoot each other down and cut each others’ throats at a moment’s notice—and all this over a matter about which they individually did not care a button and simply because their respective rulers had a difference over a piece of property that belonged to some one else.

Fortunately, however, at the last moment diplomacy had so far always stepped in and actual bloodshed been averted. Then, after an almost interminable interchange of diplomatic

communications, men of dignified mien and heavily salaried, had met in this or that European capital and had argued with each other for months, without even approaching within measurable distance of the point at issue, in the meantime bombarding each other with fine phrases and compliments of which they did not honestly mean a single word. Finally, after all this fuss and expenditure of time, some agreement was eventually arrived at which satisfied nobody and which left the door open for any amount of future misunderstanding and dispute. This great final result having been reached, a banquet was usually deemed necessary to cap the matter as a whole. Not a convivial banquet for the purposes of enjoyment and good-fellowship, but simply for the sake of formal speeches proclaiming the mutual accord of kings—kings who in private vowed to themselves one of the other: “Wait, my fine fellow. I’ll squeeze you some day yet!”

Thus it was that Raoul Alexander’s future kingdom had contrived to maintain its independence—an independence of which it was very proud, and which it vaunted so loudly that at times the powerful neighbors were quite incensed

thereby and almost led to enter into an agreement that would have very effectually suppressed it, for good and all. The elements of friction and discord at work within the kingdom, however, rivalled the dissension and strife of which it was the cause among other nations of the continent. During the reign of the present King, Raoul Alexander's father, a marked liberal spirit had developed itself—a spirit, in fact, verging strongly upon democratic doctrines. Under the pressure of public feeling the form of government had already been changed from an autocratic to a constitutional one, and yearly fresh concessions were being wrung from the governing class to the people. The clergy, at one time a power in the land, no longer counted for much, and the great public offices, formerly monopolized by members of the nobility, were now largely filled by men from the people, whose only title to office was energy and brains.

The King, a monarch of easy temperament and kindly heart, although entirely opposed alike by principle and education to this growing spirit of democracy, found himself utterly unable to stem it, and, like a sensible monarch, sought to make the best out of the inevitable. His royal con-

sort, however, a woman of strong character and a daughter of the most absolute autocrat in the civilized world, viewed the progress of events with mingled indignation and dismay. To the utmost extent of her power, she sought to induce the king to make head against the further extension of democratic tendencies, and to take a bold stand in defence of any wider infringements upon the monarchical supremacy and power. Loving the Sovereign with infinite wifely devotion, revering him not alone as her husband and the father of her children, but also as her King, this one question of the upholding of the dignity and power of the royal state was the sole subject of difference between them.

"If fear of the fate of Louis XVI. influences you in yielding to these Jacobins, do as you think best!" she exclaimed to him one day, when it was a question of affixing the royal signature to a specially obnoxious measure passed by the Chambers; "but let me assure you that no fear of encountering the fate of Marie Antoinette would ever intimidate *me*!"

"I am not so much thinking of ourselves," answered the King, gently, "as of our subjects. I hesitate before the possibility of provoking a

civil war. I wish at least to go down to my grave in a shroud that is not stained by the blood of my people."

"But what if it be the blood of rebels!"

"Ah, if it were only a question of the rebels suffering, that would perhaps be another matter. But what of the blood of our own supporters?"

Again, upon another occasion:

"Are we not monarchs?" cried she impatiently. "Have we not been chosen by Divine will to govern the masses? If so, why all these concessions to the so-called 'voice of the people?' If not, what are we doing upon the throne? Why not renounce this empty shadow of majesty? If you are indeed, King 'by the grace of God,' why should you yield that 'good pleasure of the King' which is your right? If you are not, what are we doing here? Would it not be better to abandon this empty, meaningless state and betake ourselves elsewhere?"

"Betake ourselves elsewhere!" echoed the King, with a sigh from the heart; "easy enough to say, but whither shall we go? To what corner of the earth can we withdraw and still retain our dignity? Forcibly dethroned by a revolution,

a species of martyrdom would surround us with its halo ; but to withdraw of ourselves—we may not even think of it ! This earth, big as it is, would have no place for us. The law of circumstances, if you will, has placed us at certain special heights, excluding us from the ordinary ranks of humanity. What do we understand of anything, except reigning ? Nothing ! Uncrowned, what are we ? Simply fantastic beings, cut off from the ordinary resources open to men. To us alone the rights of citizenship are denied by the nations of the earth. Deprived of our thrones we become a source of uneasiness and inconvenience to even our brother monarchs—so much so that even your father, absolute as is his power, would hardly know what to do with us. No ; believe me, my dear Marie, to reign is all that is left to us.”

“ But,” cried the Queen, angrily, “ can it be called reigning to submit to the will of men of inferior rank and birth, who often have scrambled into parliament by trickery, by appealing to the low prejudices of the masses, and by heaven knows what other disgraceful methods ! and who impose upon you Ministers whose every idea is contrary to all monarchical traditions—opposed to the very principles by virtue of which you are King ? ”

“Yes,” answered the King, mildly, “this is still *reigning*, but not *governing*. How can we change it? What can we do? Resist, you suggest. Brave public opinion, and set the constitution aside. That would mean civil war, revolution, suicide! Where should I look for support? To the church? Much too prudent, my dear, the church to compromise itself! To the nobility, then; and such of the people as still cling to the old-time traditions and ideas? Too small a body, I answer you, to offset against those who would be arrayed in opposition to us. As for the nobility, its power, its dignity, like our own have vanished. Rank to-day is a mere gilded shell without a kernel. You may call me timorous, but I confess I cannot calmly face the chances of imperiling the succession of my son. Who knows? Perhaps in his time there may be a reaction from the democratic ideas that at present prevail, and the day may come when he may be able to restore the throne to its old-time glory and power.”

And at these words the Queen can only sigh, and retire to her oratory to pray for the dawning of that day.

Thus matters are progressing in the kingdom of

H——, while Raoul Alexander, in his role of a French baron, is pursuing the bent of his inclinations at sunny Bordighera. On the very day of his visit with Edith and Baron Barr to the "Witch's Cave," the Queen is seated with the King in the large room in the royal palace which His Majesty is wont to use for the transaction of business appertaining to affairs of state, when the Prime Minister, who has prayed audience with the sovereign, is announced. Now this Prime Minister is a special object of aversion to the Queen. To her he represents the incarnation of all that is opposed to the throne and the prerogatives of royalty. She dreams of him at night as some hydra-headed monster; his very approach causes her to shudder.

To tell the truth, the Prime Minister's personal appearance is not such as to be calculated to make a favorable impression upon the ladies. Tall and lean and ugly, with stooping shoulders and a stern face, he has the appearance, in his black clothes and white cravat, of a village schoolmaster dressed up for some gala occasion. But, in spite of it all, there is a certain force about the man, a certain latent power that commands respect. As far as the Queen's views of

his political sentiments are concerned, she is not so very wrong. He has been one of the most important factors in curtailing the royal supremacy, and in building up the power of the people. Under his administration the public offices have been awarded solely according to the qualifications of the candidate, without regard to birth or rank, and to the almost total exclusion of members of the aristocracy.

“The aristocracy,” he was reported to have said privately, and quoting the words of General Foy, “the aristocracy of the Nineteenth Century is a coalition of those who seek to enjoy without having produced, to live without having labored, to monopolize all honors and emoluments without having earned them, to seize upon the public offices without being qualified to fill them—that is your aristocracy!”

By some he was even credited with having sinister designs upon the monarchical system—with a desire to do away with the throne.

“Bosh!” he had replied impatiently to a friend, when sounded on this subject. “Why should I seek to destroy the monarchical system? What for? Leave it alone. It will go to pieces of itself.”

As soon as the announcement is brought to the King that the Prime Minister is awaiting audience with His Majesty, the Queen rises.

"Nay," exclaims the King, motioning to her to re-seat herself, "do not leave. The Minister seeks audience to make certain communications to us regarding Raoul Alexander. It would be well for you to remain and hear."

In obedience to the wish thus expressed, the Queen resumes her seat and the Prime Minister is ushered in.

"I have come, Sire," he says, after bowing low before the royal pair, "to report to your Majesty the result of the inquiry instituted with regard to the whereabouts and movements of His Royal Highness, the heir apparent. The Chief Secretary of the Foreign Office has forwarded me a report—obtained only after much difficulty and through the employment of secret agents—which sets forth that after leaving Paris His Royal Highness went to London, where he remained but a short time. Thence, under the name of Baron Alexander Barr, he went to Bordighera, a small Italian town on the borders of France, where he now is."

"It is at least well," answers the King with

dignity, "that under the circumstances he sought an obscure place such as this and that he journeys incognito. Now that we know where he is, we will send him our imperative command to return at once."

"Or, if your Majesty will permit the suggestion," says the Prime Minister, "since to return seems so distasteful to His Highness, an alternative might be presented to him. If, for instance, a suitable yacht were fitted out for him, he might spend a year or so in visiting other continents and thus acquire experiences and a knowledge that might be profitable to him in the future. It could, too, be presented in that light to the people."

"Yes," assents the King, "that seems to us a wise plan and one that would meet our pleasure. It would be desirable, we deem, that he should be away from Europe for some time."

"Most desirable, Sire," replies the Minister, significantly, "if His Highness will only consent to the proposed arrangement, of which I have some fears. If, however, he insists upon remaining and continues his recent course of living, I foresee serious complications in the near future. It might be well for your Majesty to warn him that

in case of his refusal to either travel or return, he may find the revenues at present allowed him by the state materially reduced."

"His revenues reduced!" exclaims the Queen, in a shocked tone.

"Yes," replies the Prime Minister, "I cannot answer for the action of the Chambers if His Highness should continue much longer in his late course. The more radical section of the press has been discussing for some time past the large amount of money allowed by parliament to the heir apparent, and complaining that it should be spent in such a manner and in other countries. The temper of parliament is very peculiar just at the moment. It is quite possible that a motion to reduce the allowance from the nation—perhaps to suspend it altogether—might be introduced, unless he changes his manner of living."

The Queen listens to these words with rising indignation.

"They would dare to act thus with a member of the royal family—with their future King!" she cries. "Were I the King and they should attempt thus to treat my son, the heir apparent, I would have the deputies who conspired to bring

forward such a measure seized in their seats and cast into prison!"

"Your Majesty forgets the constitution," says the Prime Minister, with a grim smile.

"I would tear it up!" is her reply.

"Ah, your Majesty speaks as the true daughter of an autocrat," says the Prime Minister, with the same grim smile upon his lips; "but this is a different country from that in which your Majesty was born—different, much different, even from itself fifty years ago, and it is daily progressing further in the direction it has taken."

"I cannot believe that it will go much further," replies the Queen. "On the contrary, I believe there will be a reaction, a return to the divine and paternal form of government that rescued man from barbarism."

"Will your Majesty permit me to read a few lines?" asks the Prime Minister.

The Queen, her curiosity aroused, indicates her consent. The Prime Minister takes from his pocket a paper and gravely and impressively reads:

"All things that a century ago fought for the old order of things—religions, laws, manners, customs, property,

privileged classes, and corporate bodies—have vanished into thin air.

“ Kingdoms which have emerged from the territorial limits settled by late treaties are things of yesterday. Love of country has lost its force, because the word ‘ country ’ is of uncertain meaning to peoples sold at auction, like old furniture,—sometimes joined to the territories of their hereditary enemies ; at other times, delivered over to strange masters. Turned up and raked over, the ‘ native soil ’ is thus prepared for the reception and fructification of the seed of democracy.

“ Kings fondly fancy that by standing sentinel over their thrones they can arrest the march of intellect. They persuade themselves that by multiplying customs-houses, soldiers, policemen and spies, they can keep out thought !

“ But thought does not travel afoot ; it flies ; it is in the air we breathe. Absolute governments that establish telegraphs, railways, and steamships, and expect at the same time to keep the minds of their subjects on the level of the political dogmas of the Fourteenth Century are illogical. They are between the two stools—progress and conservatism. They fall to the ground and are confounded.

“ What is all that demagogic tirade ! ” cries the Queen, impatiently. “ Some socialistic jargon intended to muddle the minds of the masses ? ”

“ No, your Majesty,” gravely replies the Prime Minister ; “ it is an extract from the letters of

Chateaubriand to the Dauphin, which I have had copied by a secretary."

The King, realizing that the conversation has taken a turn of a particularly exciting nature for his royal consort, hastens to interpose and change the subject, and a few minutes later the Prime Minister prepares to withdraw.

"We will send our secretary, Baron von Bieler, to Bordighera," are the king's final words, "and have him present to the Prince the propositions you have outlined."

"I trust that Baron von Bieler's mission may be attended with success," answers the Prime Minister formally, as he bows and retires.

Left alone with the King, the Queen sits with her eyes fixed upon the ground, an expression of melancholy upon her face. The King goes to her and lays his hand with a caressing motion upon her shoulder,

"What are you thinking about so deeply, my dear?" he asks.

She looks up at him with a tender smile.

"I am thinking," she answers, sadly, "over ideas to which the words of your Minister have given rise. Can it really be possible," she continues with emotion, "that royalty is at its

last days—that the system of monarchical rule is rapidly approaching its end? You and I, no doubt, will be spared experiencing the end, but what a prospect for poor Raoul and his immediate descendants! Ah, these thoughts make me sad, very sad! And it would seem, too, as if those of royal race, realizing that all their ancient glory is passing from them, no longer seek to live up to their high estate, and are willing to aid the rabble in the work of trailing the royal purple in the dust. See, for instance, our son. What a life for a future ruler of a people to lead! Then, too, my father—”

She stops suddenly, tears choking her voice, at this reference to her aged and imperial father, who after having forced his wife, the Queen's mother, during the last years of her life to support the presence in the imperial palace of a mistress by whom he had several children, had within a year of the empress' death marriedmorganatically this mistress.

“No,” continues the Queen, looking up with brimming eyes at the King, as he endeavors to console her, “do not seek in your tenderness and pity to comfort me with words in which you yourself do not place any faith. No, no;

oh, my husband, my King! let us rather look the bitter truth full in the face, and behold matters as they are. If, as it truly seems, we must succumb—we are lost; let us at least die in a way worthy of our race—our heads high, and wrapped about with the last remnants of our Majesty!”

And as the King takes her to his heart, seeking tenderly to soothe her, she sinks her head upon his breast and weeps bitterly.

CHAPTER IV.

IN DANGEROUS DEPTHS.

As the days go by, Raoul Alexander and Baron Barr become more and more frequent visitors at Mrs. Patterson's villa, and the two gentleman strengthen by their high-bred courtesy and many polite attentions the good impression they have already made upon their hostess. During each visit it somehow happens that before long Raoul Alexander and Edith drift apart together, while Baron Barr devotes himself to the entertainment of the aunt. This occurs wherever the little party of four may be—on the terrace in the evening; during their strolls about the village, or lounging on the beach, fanned by the cool, salt breezes that sweep in from over the Mediterranean's blue waves.

Nor is Mrs. Patterson unobservant, or displeased.

The ambitious hope she has conceived that Edith may contract a brilliant match and enter the ranks of the nobility, has become a keen

desire now that she sees a possibility of its actual realization.

“Surely,” she says to herself, “no one can mistake Baron Alexander’s behavior for anything but that of a lover. His every motion, his every look denote that!”

But as to Edith herself, Mrs. Patterson finds it more difficult—even impossible—to come to any conclusion. She has abandoned as useless all attempts to fathom what are her niece’s true feelings on this interesting subject.

And Raoul Alexander himself is equally in the dark. He finds Edith an interesting, fascinating, tantalizing enigma; something decidedly new in his experiences of women, fraught with numerous memories of easy conquests, won to him not alone by his physical attractions, but also by the glamour which in monarchical lands surroundst he man of royal rank. Edith does not avoid him; she does not seek in any way to escape being alone with him; in fact, she seems to take pleasure in his company. He certainly cannot complain that he has not opportunities enough to make love to her; but every step in that direction is met with such a frank unconsciousness, such an easy self-possession, such an utter absence

of that melting, conquered mien he has hitherto been wont to behold in the objects of his attention. Decidedly, he thinks to himself, these American girls hold themselves high and are not to be lightly won!

Thus it is that this accomplished gallant, this past master in the arts of wooing, finds himself held well in check before the clear, frank eyes of this girl from across the seas. That she *likes* him, is fairly evident; but is there anything more than mere liking? To solve this question in the affirmative Raoul Alexander would give much.

"Sometimes," he exclaims one day to Baron Barr; "sometimes I feel like seizing her in my arms and raining kisses upon her lips until she is forced to say: 'I love you!'"

"Suppose she said: 'I hate you,'" laughs Baron Barr.

"Even so," impatiently retorts Raoul Alexander, "a storm is better any time than a dead calm."

Two days later, there arrives at Bordighera a small, single-masted yacht, which Raoul Alexander has chartered by telegraph. It is a neat, trim vessel, with graceful lines, evidently speedy,

and perfect in its appointments as far as its size permits. It is manned by two sailors and a sailing-master.

As soon as Raoul Alexander is informed of its arrival, he and Baron Barr go down to the shore to inspect the little craft, and finding it in perfect order, they turn their steps toward Mrs. Patterson's villa.

Some days before, Raoul Alexander has notified Edith and her aunt of the coming of the yacht, and has expressed the hope that they will honor him and his vessel by taking part in a sailing excursion.

"Oh that will be delightful!" is Edith's reply. "Every time I look out at the sea, I long to be upon it. The water looks so blue and smiling here."

Mrs. Patterson is, by no means so enthusiastic in her acceptance of the invitation—to tell the truth, she is a poor sailor—but she has promised to go if her health permits.

When Raoul Alexander and Baron Barr reach the villa, they are received by three ladies—Mrs. Patterson, Edith and a Mrs. Enright, a young matron from Chicago, who is making a trip through Europe with her husband and who has

come to Bordighera to visit Mrs. Patterson, while he is attending to some business at Bordeaux.

The two gentlemen having been presented to Mrs. Enright, Raoul Alexander imparts the information as to the arrival of his yacht. As it is still early in the forenoon, and both wind and weather are favorable, he suggests that the three ladies join him and Baron Barr in making a trial trip.

Mrs. Patterson pleads a headache as an excuse for escaping an attack of seasickness; but she suggests that Edith go—under Mrs. Enright's chaperonage.

The suggestion is approved by all, and the two ladies retire to make themselves ready for the day's excursion. When they reappear, Edith wears a natty little sailor hat that gives her a very jaunty, coquettish look, and a plain cloth dress that is alike admirably suited for the haps and mishaps of sailing, and for the display of the graceful outlines of her comely form. Mrs. Enright, the chaperon, who is but little older than her charge, has also donned a gown fitted for the deck of a yacht, and at the same time decidedly becoming.

“These American women certainly understand

the art of dressing well," thinks Raoul Alexander to himself.

They set out gayly, two by two, Baron Barr, apparently by no means dissatisfied with his lot, devoting his attention to this buxom Chicago matron, and leaving Raoul Alexander to take charge of Edith.

Arrived at the shore, both the ladies are warm in their expressions of admiration of the little craft, and this admiration increases to enthusiasm when they descend to the cabin and perceive the daintiness and comfort of its fitting up.

Meanwhile the sailors have weighed anchor, the sails have been hoisted, and the yacht is gliding out over the blue waters. When the beach is a mile or more astern, the course is changed and they sail along the coast—a coast rich in ever changing pictures of sloping hills and flowering vales, with the blue capped mountains looming up picturesquely in the background and the glorious Italian sunshine over all.

Edith and Mrs. Enright are seated in wicker-work lounging chairs on the deck, a snow-white awning stretched overhead. Mrs. Enright is chatting gayly with Baron Barr, the suggestion of a lively flirtation in the lady's coquettish glances

and the Baron's beaming smiles. Edith, beside whom is seated Raoul Alexander, is somewhat less lively, less voluble, than her gay chaperon, but her pleasure is, perhaps, none the less keen. Her eyes rest upon the picturesque shore with warm appreciation of its beauty, and then, turning in the opposite direction, watch with equal delight the long, rolling waves, with their pale green crests, stretching far, far away to the distant horizon. There is pleasure for her, too, in the soft, sweet breezes fanning her cheeks; in the low murmuring of the sea; in the softly swaying motion of the little craft, as it rises and falls with rhythmic motion in its passage over the waters.

Raoul Alexander is also, no doubt, appealed to in a measure by the natural beauty about him, for he is vaguely conscious at the moment of an infinite sense of well-being. He leans back in his chair and gazes upon the fair, bright face before him—a face whose brilliancy of coloring is heightened by the passing breezes, and whose eyes look dreamy and soulful in their half voluptuous contemplation of the glories of sea and land.

“How lovely it all is!” she murmurs with a sigh of happiness.

"You are enjoying yourself?" he asks, eagerly.

"I never felt more happy than I do just now," she says, softly.

"You do not know how glad it makes me to hear you say that!" replies Raoul Alexander, with a meaning glance.

Both words and glance seem, however, lost upon her, for her eyes are looking away to the sea, apparently entirely taken up in watching the play of the waves as they roll lazily in from the horizon to the shore.

"You like the sea?" he asks, bent upon drawing her attention to him.

Slowly she turns her eyes toward him:

"I *love* it," she answers.

The hot blood mounts to Raoul Alexander's cheeks. Love it! How sweet the word sounds upon her lips!

"You are not at all afraid of the water?" he continues.

"Not in the least."

"I am glad of that," he rejoins, "for, that being the case, you will not mind our going further out to sea. It will be pleasanter," he adds, "than to keep tacking and trimming along the coast."

"Certainly not!" cries Edith, with gay enthu-

siasm, "let us go far—far out to sea. As far as America, if you like!"

Raoul Alexander laughs.

"I am willing," he declares, "if you will only promise that you will not grow tired of the voyage and—your company."

He gives an order to the sailing master, and a moment later the vessel's sharp, graceful bow turns away from the coast, and the yacht bounds over the waves, seaward.

At this point one of the sailors, acting as steward, makes his appearance with a couple of large hampers, and in a remarkably short space of time a decidedly substantial luncheon is being served on deck. All manner of choice delicacies are there, together with a fine assortment of champagnes and liquors. No matter what the conditions may be, Raoul Alexander never fails to provide carefully for the inner man!

In him and in Baron Barr Mrs. Enright and Edith have two most gallant cavaliers, who wait upon their every want with eager attention. Surely, neither on land nor sea can there be found a brighter, merrier luncheon party than this, on the shaded deck of the little yacht that still flies seaward.

It is now early afternoon, but no one notes the passing of the hours. Did any of them look astern, they would see that the shore has sunk to a low, dark line, its prominent features grown hazy and indistinct in the distance. But no one does think of looking back as they gayly laugh and chat together, and the yacht still glides on over the sun-bathed waves, with light and brightness all about them, and the sky clear and blue overhead.

But the wind no longer blows with steady, sustained force. At times it almost dies out ; then again, returns in fitful puffs of steadily increasing strength, that at one moment fill out the sails, and the next, leave them flapping undecidedly against the mast. Broken now at intervals is the measured cadence of the vessel's rise and fall as it sweeps over the restless bosom of the sea, and the yacht's bow meets, every now and then, waves that buffet it and set her sides a-quiver.

The sailing master looks at the sky with increasing frequency. At length he calls one of the sailors to the wheel, and approaches Raoul Alexander. He whispers something to him and Raoul Alexander goes back with him to the wheel.

"You think there is a chance of a storm?" he asks.

"Yes, Excellency," answers the sailing master, "I think there are signs of it. Half an hour ago I saw a cloud low down astern. It has spread and risen since, until now, see! the sky over there is darkened by it. The wind shifts and is irregular, and the waves are growing stronger. Storms, as your Excellency knows, no doubt, come up very fast in these waters."

"You think, then, we should return?"

"I think it would be wise, Excellency."

"Very well; put about!"

The sailing master takes the wheel and gives his orders to his men. Once more the yacht turns her bow, this time landward; no longer flying freely before the breeze, but against the wind now, and tacking first on this course, then on the other, in the effort to coax the wind to fill her sails.

"We are going back?" asks Edith, noticing these manœuvres.

"Yes," replies Raoul Alexander. "It is nearly three o'clock, and it will take us longer to return than it did to sail out, as the wind is now against us."

"Look!" exclaims Edith, suddenly, her eyes turned toward the sky, fast clouding darkly to the north; "doesn't that look like a storm?"

"Rain," mutters Raoul Alexander, with assumed carelessness, "rain, most probably."

Now that her notice has been attracted, however, Edith notes with increasing attention, the changed appearance of the sea, the fitful, gusty character of the wind, the rapidly growing darkness of the northern sky, and little as she knows about these matters it seems to her that these signs bode something more ominous than mere rain. Raoul Alexander talks to her gayly as ever and seeks in every way to chain her attention, but in this she more than half detects the ruse to guard her from alarm.

Now that the yacht is forced to battle against the cross seas and a head wind, there is no longer the pleasant, undulating motion of her earlier course. The vessel makes sudden plunges and upward bounds as the waves recede or rise, and staggers heavily from time to time as the sea dashes against the bow and sides, and plashes the deck with spray.

Each moment the dark clouds to the north spread darker and darker; the wind, still fitful,

begins to change its petulance to anger; the waves rise to higher heights, sink to lower depths, their crests whiter and more foam laden.

The tossing of the vessel has already brought pallor to Mrs. Enright's face, and she begs the aid of Baron Barr's arm to assist her to the cabin.

"Won't you go below, too?" Raoul Alexander asks Edith.

"No," she answers, quickly. "Please let me stay. I would rather face the storm here than shut up in the cabin."

He smiles to her reassuringly.

"On board this vessel," he rejoins, with courtly air, "your will shall ever be our law."

His last words are rendered almost inaudible by a sharp and sudden shriek of the fast rising wind; the storm clouds have spread rapidly; the whole sky is now black.

The sailing master has by this time completed his preparations to meet the coming storm. The awning covering the after deck has been removed; the sails reefed; everything is taut and shipshape.

Raoul Alexander and Edith stand aft near the wheel, holding the rail.

"You are not afraid?" he whispers, caressingly.

"Not so very much," she answers, bravely. "Not as much afraid as I should be below," she adds, hastily, fearing he is about to insist upon her going to the cabin.

Her face is grave and slightly pale, but the lips are firm, and the eyes look out steadily into the blackness of the storm.

"I really ought to insist upon taking you below," he says. "It is hardly safe for you here."

"You said you would let me have my way," she pleads. "Won't you keep your word?"

Raoul Alexander bends over her.

"Yes," he murmurs, completely carried away by the sweetness of her pleading; "how can I say no to you—how can I refuse you anything!"

She glances up at him with a look of gratitude—a look that sets his heart to beating wildly, while the wind blusters and howls and the spray falls thicker and faster upon the deck. Despite the uproar about them, Raoul Alexander's thoughts are not of the storm. He is at the moment half regretting that he is of royal race, the heir to a throne, instead of some simple

nobleman or gentleman, free to openly woo and win this sweet girl at his side after the manner of other men. Decidedly, he reflects, royalty has its drawbacks. At the moment, he finds that the royal purple chafes.

And now there is a sudden lull. The wind seems to die away; there is an instant of unnatural stillness. Then, with a sudden shriek, answered by a sullen roar from the sea, the wind is upon them again.

The storm, in its full fury, has burst.

Grasping the rail firmly, Raoul Alexander passes his arm around Edith's waist and draws her to him. Even in this moment of excitement and danger, he experiences a thrill as he holds her thus in this close contact, in this near embrace.

The bow of the yacht rears upward under a rising wave, leaving the stern hanging low in the trough of the sea, when at that instant a second wave breaks over the stern and sweeps the decks. It is only by the exertion of his utmost strength that Raoul Alexander saves himself and Edith from being swept away and into the sea.

Hardly have his eyes cleared themselves of the

blinding spray when he grasps her hands and puts them again on the rail.

“Hold fast! Hold fast!” he cries, warningly, and springs to the wheel.

Not a moment too soon does he seize it.

The wave that swept the after deck has struck the sailing master full force, and carrying him with it has dashed him violently against the rail. He lies there on the deck, half stunned and helpless, and the wheel, wrenched from his grasp, no longer guides the vessel. The bow swings around; another moment and the seas, striking broadside on, would have engulfed them.

But Raoul Alexander's strong arms have forced the wheel back and hold it firm, and his orders ring out to the sailors, as the vessel veers around and makes head to the seas.

At this critical moment Baron Barr emerges from the cabin, surmising that his aid may be required, and seeing Edith standing alone hastens to her side.

“Let me take you to the cabin,” he exclaims. “You are in danger here.”

“No, no,” she answers, quickly, “please do not mind me. Help *him*; see! he is in danger of being carried overboard!” and she looks

toward the sailing master who, still dazed, is making an effort to gain his feet.

Before going to the man's assistance, however, Baron Barr seizes a rope and passing a loop around her waist makes fast the ends. An instant later he is beside the sailing master whom he helps, not without difficulty, to reach a point of safety. From that time on he occupies himself in bearing help to Edith and the injured man, and in aiding the crew.

For two hours or more the yacht battles with the storm. The wind roars and shrieks, the waves dash over the sides and at times sweep the deck, and the vessel tosses and sways and plunges down into depths from which it seems she will never again rise. In the end, however, she ever rights herself and struggles bravely on—as gallant a little craft as ever fought her way in angry seas.

And through it all Raoul Alexander stands, like some viking of old, at the wheel, his fair hair drenched with spray, his blue eyes looking out undauntedly over the sea. As he stands there facing danger unflinchingly, and prepared to battle with strong arms and cool judgment for his life and the lives of those on board, he

presents a nobler figure than he has ever displayed as the courtly gallant of Parisian drawing-rooms, or than he can ever hope to display even as a monarch surrounded by all the brilliant accompaniments of a royal suite. From time to time, his and Edith's eyes meet, and he smiles at her in encouragement. Even in this hour of turmoil and danger, a thrill of joy passes over him as he intuitively reads in her glance that, in this last brief space of time, he has won more in her regard than he could have gained in weeks of assiduous wooing.

At length there come signs of an abatement in the fury of the storm. The wind is less fierce; the waves less high; the clouds less black and lowering.

"Courage!" he calls to her, "courage. The worst will soon be over!" And she smiles back at him gratefully for his words.

His prediction proves true, for before long the clouds—slowly at first, then more rapidly—roll back; the wind fast moderates, and the waters, though still white with angry foam, no longer rise to such threatening heights. The Mediterranean storm is dying away as rapidly as it sprang up.

For some time longer Raoul Alexander remains at the wheel, but at last, all danger over, he calls one of the sailors to take his place and goes to Edith. At the same moment Baron Barr comes up and joins them.

"I must go to the cabin," he says, after a few minutes conversation between the three, "and see how Mrs. Enright is. I do not know if she will forgive me for deserting her so suddenly, but I felt my place was up here."

"Oh, yes!" rejoins Edith, "let us go and find out how it has fared with her. It must have been even more dreadful down there than on deck!"

She accompanies Baron Barr to the cabin, Raoul Alexander remaining on deck to fill the place of the disabled sailing master. They find Mrs. Enright recovering from a severe attack of sea-sickness—an attack so severe, indeed, that the storm and its attendant dangers have been matters of secondary consideration. Edith accordingly remains with her, giving such assistance as lies in her power.

When she again comes on deck, she finds that the moon has risen and that they are rapidly nearing shore. Before long the yacht drops

anchor, and a few minutes later they are once more on land. Their first care is to send for medical assistance for the sailing master, who is suffering from severe bruises, in addition to a fractured rib. This having been done, Baron Barr hurries off to find some conveyance in which to make the short journey to Mrs. Patterson's villa. The best he is able to secure at the moment are two small coupés, each capable of accommodating only two persons. Into one of these he assists Mrs. Enright, and Edith and Raoul Alexander enter the other.

As they start homeward, Edith begins to feel the effect, now that the excitement is over, of the experiences through which she has passed. A sense of heaviness and fatigue is upon her, as she leans back against the cushions of the carriage and draws her wet skirts about her.

"I have not thanked you yet," she murmurs presently, turning to him very sweetly, "for all your care of me. Had it not been for you, I believe that first big wave would surely have carried me away."

He leans toward her, his heart beating fast, intoxicated by her words of praise and gratitude. All prudence, all reason, are for the moment

cast to the winds. His one overwhelming desire is to bring the light of love to her eyes, to hear one word of endearment from her lips.

“Do not thank me!” he exclaims, passionately. “One does not want to be thanked for serving those one loves. And—you know, you must know, I love you!”

Her eyes droop, and the color flashes to her cheeks.

“Say that you will let me care for you always,” he murmurs, in the same passionate tones.

There is no mistaking the meaning of his words. Her bosom heaves troublously, but her eyes are still downcast, and she is silent.

“Will you not answer me?” he pleads. “Won’t you say you like me—just a little?”

He has taken her hand in his and holds it caressingly. She does not withdraw it.

“Come; say—just a little!” he urges.

Her eyes glance upward for an instant into his; then quickly droop again. The carriage comes to a sudden stop in front of the villa.

“Oh!” she murmurs confusedly, “do not ask me now—so very soon. Do not make me answer—yet.”

The driver has bustled down from his box and holds the door open for them to alight.

“Not *yet*, then,” he whispers meaningly beside her ear, “but soon!”

He assists her from the carriage and, she leaning rather heavily on his arm, they pass up the steps. As he says good night to her under the porch, she allows her hand to rest for an instant in his, and Raoul Alexander fancies he detects a slight, lingering pressure that is as a timid caress.

And he goes home, soaked to the skin, but his blood on fire.

CHAPTER V.

A FLYING RUMOR.

LIKE Mrs Patterson, Raoul Alexander and Baron Barr have engaged one of those little furnished villas, so plentiful in the Riviera, as a stopping place during their stay at Bordighera. On the morning after the experiences on board the yacht, Raoul Alexander is pacing up and down the veranda in front of this villa, smoking a cigar and thinking over the exciting events of the preceding day.

“It’s wonderful,” he muses, “what an influence that girl’s presence has on me. Why, upon my soul, I really believe that last night I almost asked her to marry me! To marry me, eh? Well, that *was* going it heavy! Heaven knows I’ve been in love with many a pretty girl before, but never quite so far gone as this time. When I’m with her, I’m capable of anything—any folly! Who knows, if it wouldn’t be better to drop the game right now. But then, she is so lovely—such a figure—”

Just as he reaches this point in his reflections a messenger makes his appearance before the gate and advances along the little garden path, a letter in his hand.

"His Excellency, Baron Alexander Barr?" inquires the man, touching his cap.

Raoul Alexander nods a good-natured affirmative and carelessly extends his hand for the letter. As he glances at the superscription, however, his careless air suddenly vanishes and a flush mounts to his cheeks.

"An answer, your Excellency," says the man, again touching his cap.

"Very well; wait!" hastily exclaims Raoul Alexander, as he crosses to the other end of the balcony where, tilted back in a roomy lounging chair, Baron Barr is reading a book.

"Hector!" he exclaims eagerly, "what do you think! We are being hunted up. Here is a messenger with a letter from Von Bieler. I recognized the handwriting the instant I saw it. Wonder what the old fellow has to say?"

"I would suggest that you open the letter and see," replies Baron Barr, coolly.

"Not a bad idea!" laughs Raoul Alexander, breaking the seal. "Fortunately," he continues

approvingly, "the old fellow has had the grace to preserve my incognito and to address me as Baron Alexander Barr. Look!"

He tosses the envelope into his companion's lap, and quickly unfolding the letter reads aloud:

"Baron von Bieler requests an audience with Baron Alexander Barr at his earliest convenience."

"Ha, ha!" laughs Raoul Alexander, "not so terrible, after all! What would you answer?"

"You will have to see him, of course?"

"Yes, undoubtedly."

"Well, then, the sooner over the better," exclaims the Baron. "How will this do?"

He draws a small writing-desk toward him, and hastily scratching a line on a sheet of note paper, reads:

"Baron Alexander Barr presents his compliments to Baron von Bieler, and will be pleased to see him at noon to-day."

"Certainly brief and to the point," declares Raoul Alexander.

"What higher qualities could you ask of a correspondent?" inquires Baron Barr.

"None, *mon cher*," assents Raoul Alexander, "and off it goes."

He motions to Baron Barr to seal the letter, and forthwith dispatches it by the messenger.

An hour later Baron von Bieler presents himself at the villa. Cold and formal of manner at all times, his bearing upon this occasion is formality and iciness itself. He regards Raoul Alexander as in open rebellion to the Sovereign, and is bent upon marking alike his own personal disapproval and the displeasure of his master, the King. In the coldest and briefest possible phrases, he explains the object of his mission. He is the bearer of a message from His Majesty, the King, to which an immediate reply is commanded. With these words, he hands Raoul Alexander a letter, stamped with the King's private seal.

Raoul Alexander reads the letter from his royal father, and realizes from its tone that further resistance is impossible. Very curtly and very clearly the King puts the two alternatives—either immediate return, or a pledge to embark upon a cruise of not less than a year's duration.

“A cruise to last not less than a year!” exclaims Raoul Alexander. “Hem! they are bent upon getting rid of me for a good long spell!”

“If you take that view,” answers Baron von

Bieler, "permit me to point out to you that you still have the alternative of returning home."

Raoul Alexander, however, gives little heed to this suggestion.

"With whom will lie the selection of the members of the party accompanying me on this expedition?" he asks. "With me?"

"With you!" exclaims Baron von Bieler, dumfounded by the audacity of this proposition, and by the results which he foresees, even at a glance, its adoption would entail; "with you! Oh, no; not by any means. The selection will lie absolutely—most absolutely—with His Majesty, the King. Your personal following will be strictly limited to three attendants, or companions—to three males," he hastens to add cautiously, and as if to avoid any possible misunderstanding.

"Am I not to be allowed even a typewriter?" asks Raoul Alexander, with an attempt at facetiousness.

"Three male souls," repeats the Baron, dogmatically.

"Nor a female barber?"

"This is no subject for levity," declares Baron von Bieler, with dignity.

"I should say not!" rejoins Raoul Alexander, ruefully. "How long will it take to make the yacht ready?"

"It is hoped to complete the work in six weeks," answers the Baron.

"Six weeks; that means two months," reflects Raoul Alexander; "there are always delays in these matters. Well, anything is better than to be bored to death out there."

"I think I shall have no difficulty in arriving at a decision," he says aloud.

"Under the nature of my instructions you have twenty-four hours in which to decide," answers Baron von Bieler.

"Not necessary," declares Raoul Alexander; "I will take the yacht."

"The cruise to last not less than one year?"

"Yes," assents Raoul Alexander, with a wry face.

"And you pledge yourself to embark the moment the yacht is ready?"

"I so pledge myself."

Baron von Bieler rises, evidently regarding his mission as accomplished, and is about to at once withdraw. Raoul Alexander stops him, however, with questions relative to the health of the royal

family, and even extends an invitation to the Baron to dine with him before his departure. The Baron promptly declines this invitation, and answers the questions put to him with extreme brevity. He makes no concealment of his haste to be off, and of his disinclination to in any way countenance one who has placed himself in such open contumacy to the will of the King.

The royal ambassador once gone, Raoul Alexander immediately rejoins Baron Barr.

"Well," he cries, "it seems that I am doomed to exile. I have been sentenced to banishment to the North Pole, or some other place of the kind for a year to come."

"Get them to make it the Fiji Islands," suggests Baron Barr. "The costumes of the ladies there will at least in some degree awaken souvenirs of the Paris ballet. But come; let me hear the terms of this edict of banishment."

Raoul Alexander, with mournful mien, describes the nature of the ultimatum presented to him and the decision he has reached.

"You will accompany me, Hector?" asks Raoul Alexander, a slight accent of eagerness in his voice.

"Yes; how can I do otherwise?" cries Baron

Barr, lightly. "It shall not be said that I deserted you in your exile."

A pleased expression crosses Raoul Alexander's face—an expression his companion is gratified to note. He is glad to feel himself of service to his royal friend—not only because he takes sincere pleasure in Raoul Alexander's companionship, there being so many points of similarity of taste between them, but also with a view to future contingencies. The Baron's fortune, never a very large one, has been yearly becoming more and more involved under the strain of gay life in Paris, and he dimly realizes the possibility of days of enforced retrenchment and obscurity in the future. Should those days ever come, it may—despite the proverbial ingratitude of kings—prove very convenient to have a reigning monarch as an old-time friend.

"You have still six weeks," continues the Baron, reflectively.

"Say two months!" exclaims Raoul Alexander, eagerly. "There is sure to be some delay."

"Two months, then, if you will. You are, of course, at liberty to spend these two months as you please. What do you say to Paris? The

trouble there has all blown over by this time, and there can be no objection to your return."

"Yes, we will go back to Paris," answers Raoul Alexander, quickly, "and enjoy the brief respite before us to the very full, I warrant you. But I don't want to return yet—not for just a little while yet."

"I understand," rejoins Baron Barr, with a meaning smile, "but remember we have not much time before us—not much time to lose."

"To lose!" echoes Raoul Alexander, "you call this losing time. Ah, when I think of *her*, I feel like abdicating my rights to the throne, so as to be left at liberty to enjoy myself, without bother or hindrance, as suits my fancy."

"Don't do that," argues Baron Barr, sagely. "Thrones are scarce; American girls plenty. Why not make up our minds to be ready to leave some day next week?"

"Some day next week!" repeats Raoul Alexander, thoughtfully. "Yes," he adds slowly, "I shall then, perhaps, be ready."

In the course of the afternoon they call at Mrs. Patterson's villa. The day is an unusually hot one, and they find their hostess, Mrs. Enright and Edith seated in the coolest recess of

the piazza, all three reading. After the first greetings have passed and the visitors have seated themselves, the conversation turns upon Mrs. Enright's approaching departure, she having that morning received a letter from her husband announcing that his business affairs will delay him longer than expected, and directing her to join him at Bordeaux. Both the gentlemen, especially Baron Barr, are profuse in their expressions of regret over the prospect of so soon losing the pleasure of her company.

"Ah," cries Edith presently, addressing Baron Barr; "I came across an item to-day in one of the French newspapers about a friend of yours."

"A friend of mine?" exclaims Baron Barr, puzzled.

"Do guess who it was!"

"A rather difficult task," smiles the Baron. "One has so many friends."

"Well, then," laughs Edith, "I won't keep you longer in suspense. It was His Royal Highness, Prince Raoul Alexander."

For his very life Baron Barr cannot repress a slight start. As for his companion, he drops a book which he has been holding in his lap and hastily bends forward to pick it up.

"His Royal Highness, Prince Raoul Alexander," repeats Baron Barr slowly, and, steadying his voice with an effort. "Ah, indeed; and what does it say of him?"

"Oh, nothing much. See, here it is," and she takes a Paris newspaper—*Le Matin*—from a chair beside her and after glancing over it for an instant, hands it to him, indicating a certain paragraph.

Baron Barr quickly runs his eye over the lines, and then reads the item aloud:

It is whispered in diplomatic circles that there exists a serious rupture between the King of H—— and the heir apparent, His Royal Highness, Prince Raoul Alexander, whose rather sudden departure from Paris some time ago caused such poignant regret in various circles both of the gay and of the fashionable world. The present whereabouts of the Prince are not known, but there is a further rumor that he is honoring with his attentions an unknown American girl, with whom he is said to have been greatly impressed prior to his departure from Paris. This rumor is all the more peculiar in view of the dislike which the Prince is said to have hitherto had for Americans.

Having finished the reading of this paragraph, Baron Barr looks up:

"A very extraordinary item!" he remarks.

"Extraordinary—why?" asks Edith.

"Very impertinent, to say the least."

"Impertinent!" interposes Mrs. Enright; "you think so? You ought to see some of the personal items in the Chicago newspapers. Do you also know this Prince?" she asks, turning to Raoul Alexander.

"Like a brother!" responds the latter, brazenly.

"What is he like?"

"Like?" echoes Raoul Alexander. "Let me see; how would you describe him, Hector?"

"Decidedly charming," declares Baron Barr emphatically.

"I shall never forget," says Edith, with a smile, "Baron Barr's dismay when at the American minister's ball I told him that I did not care to meet his friend, the Prince. Come, now; confess you thought me very rude."

"I could never think that," replies the Baron gallantly, "but I did think that if you had met His Highness, you would, perhaps, have modified your views."

"Never; from what I have heard of him. I think he must be simply detestable."

"Ah! you must surely have been misinformed

with regard to him," exclaims Baron Barr quickly.

"I think not. From what I have been told I have a strong idea that he is a self-sufficient creature, who has an idea—because of his rank, probably—that every woman must fall in love with him at sight."

"Calumny—gross calumny! I felt sure your informant had misled you," laughs Baron Barr, inwardly much amused by the situation. "What do you say, Alec?" he adds, turning with a malicious twinkle in his eye to the luckless Raoul Alexander.

"I wonder who the American girl they speak of can be," murmurs the latter, bent on creating a diversion.

"She can't be much, you may be sure of that!" retorts Edith, with a pert toss of the head.

"Ah, you think not?"

"No, or she would not bring her country-women into disgrace by permitting the attentions of such a man. It is American women of this kind, who allow themselves to be ridiculously carried away simply because a man happens to be of high rank—which, by the way, is totally

contrary to all our American ideas of equality—whose behavior brings Americans into contempt. It is on this account that the assertion is so often made that American women are simply mad after titles. It makes me quite angry to think of it. And the paper, too, speaks of this person being ‘honored’ by the prince’s attentions. Honored! Just think of it! I should call it something the reverse.”

“My dear, my dear!” interposes Mrs. Patterson, feeling that her niece is allowing herself to be somewhat carried away.

“I mean it, Auntie,” exclaims Edith warmly. “Then, too, it says that he dislikes Americans.”

“You really must accord me some day the pleasure of making a presentation,” declares Baron Barr, teasingly.

“I fear you would be sorry if you did,” quickly answers Edith; “for this prince would certainly find that there was at least one American woman who returned his dislike in full measure.”

“My dear!” again exclaims Mrs. Patterson; “you are really too pronounced in your views;” and she hastens to turn the subject of conversation.

Raoul Alexander’s face, which is partly con-

cealed every now and then by the newspaper which he has carelessly picked up, is a study of shifting color during the progress of this animated talk. He is deeply wounded; sorely offended by the contemptuous words which have fallen from the lips of this American girl. Never in all the course of his rose-strewn and flattered existence has his august personality been so rudely dealt with—never, at least, in his hearing. To think that he, a royal highness, should be thus disdainfully referred to by an obscure American girl—the daughter of an individual who was a vender of pork! It is not without some difficulty that he maintains his usual demeanor during the rest of their stay.

“Well,” exclaims Baron Barr, after they have ridden part of the way home in silence, “your American charmer does not seem to be very much in love with a certain royal highness.”

Raoul Alexander turns upon him, his face deeply flushed.

“Wait!” he cries, passionately, “wait! The day may yet come when it will be very different—when she will pant and kiss and cling for a smile from this same royal highness she affects so greatly to abhor. There may yet be a change

—a very great change—in the burthen of her song!”

“I hope it may come soon, then,” rejoins the Baron. “I am getting a trifle bored here. I am longing for the return to Paris.”

“Then your wish shall soon be gratified,” retorts the prince. “Come; let us ride faster. Let us get home and—talk.”

When they reach their villa, they are closeted together for some time. After they have dined, the conference is resumed. It is seldom either of them goes to bed early, but upon this occasion they sit up even later than usual, talking far into the night.

Immediately after breakfast next morning they mount their horses, and traverse the short distance separating Bordighera from the French frontier. Passing over into French territory, they ride into the pretty town of San Raphael.

CHAPTER VI.

MME. DE COLLIGNY'S HOSPITALITY.

ONE afternoon early in the following week Edith, followed by her groom, is riding along one of the well-kept, picturesque roads which stretch in various directions from Bordighera. The day is a supremely beautiful one, somewhat cooler than usual—just the kind of a day for the enjoyment of horseback riding in its perfection.

Having passed over a stretch of level road at a brisk gallop, she comes to some undulating ground along which she walks her horse, gazing dreamily the meantime over the dainty bits of scenery which successively open up before her. Presently, as she approaches a narrow path bordered by trees, jutting off to the right, her horse suddenly pricks up his ears, startled by the sound of hoofs, and an instant later two horsemen emerge from the path at a sharp gallop and swing around into the main road. Quickly glancing up, Edith recognizes Raoul Alexander and Baron Barr.

So close are they, and so suddenly have they come upon her, that her horse gives a frightened neigh, and prances and swerves excitedly.

In an instant the two are beside her.

"I am afraid we almost frightened your horse! Pray forgive our carelessness!" exclaim Raoul Alexander and Baron Barr in a breath.

Quickly Edith—a very fair horsewoman—has brought her steed into subjection.

"We were a little startled," she answers, smiling pleasantly. "You came upon us so unexpectedly. Altogether my fault, though! I should give Mountain Boy more exercise; he wouldn't be so restive then."

"Restive!" exclaims Baron Barr; "there is nothing like a sharp gallop to cure that. Will you permit us to accompany you down the road?"

Edith signifies her acquiescence, and they canter away together. Turning first to the left and then again to the right, they have soon reached the frontier and are riding upon French soil. They press on a little further, through a country simply marvellous in its wealth of natural beauty, and presently perceive before them the white walls of a pretty little village.

“San Raphael,” murmurs Raoul Alexander, in answer to an inquiry from Edith.

“Ah, we are already in France?”

“Yes; we have crossed the frontier.”

“Let us ride over as far as San Raphael,” suggests Baron Barr, “and pass through the village. There are some remarkably beautiful gardens there—remarkably beautiful even for these parts.”

“Yes” assents Raoul Alexander, “they are indeed wonderful. I noticed them the other day when I rode over to see Mme. de Colligny. “Mme. de Colligny,” he adds, in an explanatory tone, turning to Edith, “is a distant relative of ours, who happens to live in San Raphael.”

Edith glances at the sky, which has become somewhat overcast during the past few minutes.

“Do you think we had better go so far,” she asks, doubtfully.

“Far!” echoes Baron Barr, “why, we are almost there.”

“It looks like rain.”

“A mere passing cloud,” says Raoul Alexander, carelessly. “Besides, even if there is a shower, we could get under shelter more easily in the village than on the open road.”

The force of this observation is obvious, and

offering no further objection, Edith gives rein to her horse and a few minutes later they are in San Raphael.

Baron Barr's praise of the beauty of the place has certainly not been exaggerated, the gardens surrounding some of the villas being simply marvels of loveliness. The grounds of one residence in particular—that of a world-famed popular writer—specially attract their admiring attention, and Edith enthusiastically admits that San Raphael indeed well repays the trouble of a visit.

Presently Raoul Alexander begins to manifest a sudden interest in the sky, which still remains slightly overcast.

“I am afraid you were right after all!” he exclaims, as they are passing through one of the village streets. “I believe there is going to be a shower.”

Edith, however, seems little troubled by this contingency, her attention apparently almost entirely monopolized by the beauties about her.

“We can easily get under shelter here,” she murmurs confidently. “And I don't think it will rain. To me, it looks lighter than it did some minutes ago.”

Raoul Alexander, however, shakes his head doubtfully.

They have gone but a short distance further along the street when Baron Barr suddenly turns in his saddle, with an air of animation.

"See," he exclaims to Raoul Alexander, "there is Mme. de Colligny!"

Edith follows Baron Barr's glance and perceives, a few houses away, an elderly lady, with white hair and tall, graceful figure, standing in one of the gardens. Almost at the same instant, it seems, the lady catches sight of the party, and advances with some eagerness, to the gate.

Both the gentlemen check their horses and Edith, under the circumstances, is compelled to do the same. The lady opens the gate and steps toward them.

"Permit me to present Miss Hepworth—our relative, Mme. de Colligny," murmurs Raoul Alexander, and the lady smiles graciously to Edith as they bow. "It looked," he continues quickly, addressing Mme. de Colligny, "as if we might be compelled to make an invasion upon you and seek shelter of your hospitality. We have been dreading a shower."

Mme. de Colligny casts a rapid glance toward the sky.

"Yes," she answers, "it is certainly going to rain. A mere shower, though, probably. I shall insist upon your remaining with me until the sky clears."

"Thanks," exclaims Raoul Alexander, promptly, "I think it will be wise to accept. If the rain should prove to be heavy, I know you will send us home in your carriage."

"With pleasure," answers Mme. de Colligny.

As he speaks, Raoul Alexander is already out of the saddle and standing beside Edith, prepared to assist her to dismount. For her part, she sees but trifling indications of this predicted shower, but not wishing to set herself in direct opposition to her companions, she shakes her foot loose from the stirrup and, assisted by Raoul Alexander, springs lightly to the ground. At the same instant her groom gallops up to hold the horses.

Preceded by their hostess, they enter the house and are shown into a dainty little parlor, through whose open windows comes the fragrance of the garden.

"Your first visit to San Raphael, *mademoiselle*?" asks Mme. de Colligny.

"How do you like our village?"

"It is, I think," answers Edith, enthusiastically, "the loveliest little place I have ever seen—one big, beautiful bed of flowers!"

"Ah; you are fond of flowers?"

"Indeed, I love them."

"My man, then, shall cut you a bouquet," declares Mme. de Colligny. "Your groom can carry it home. I will tell François just how I want it made up;" and with a hastily murmured word of excuse to her guests she is out of the room.

Presently she reappears, and is followed a few moments later by a trim French maid, bearing a silver tray upon which are wine for the gentlemen and some chocolate, in quaint little cups of odd design, for Edith and Mme. de Colligny.

The hostess rises, takes a cup from the tray and personally hands it to Edith. As the girl retires, and they sit sipping the refreshments, a moment of half constrained silence comes over the little party. Instantly, however, Mme. de Colligny sets the ball of conversation rolling, and not for a moment does she again allow the talk to languish.

Some time later Raoul Alexander comes out of the house and walks down to the gate.

"William," he says to the English groom, "Miss Hepworth has decided not to ride back. She will return in Mme. de Colligny's carriage. You may take the horses home."

The man touches his hat and, leading Edith's horse, is cantering an instant later up the road.

BOOK III.

THE MAN FROM THE WEST.

CHAPTER I.

A CALL FROM BEYOND THE SEAS.

IT has been a morning of even more than wonted activity in the private office of Mr. John Parker Hepworth. Messengers have been hurrying in and out; dispatches dictated by Mr. Hepworth in person have been sent forth by the dozen; Mr. Jennings, the general superintendent, has been summoned a number of times to the private office, and great men in the money world, men whose names are known from one end of the land to the other, have put in an appearance and been closeted in lengthy and evidently highly confidential consultation with the head of the house.

Expectancy is on tiptoe among the various heads of departments in the establishment and many are the surmises hazarded as to the causes of all this stir. Evidently there is some big movement—one of those monster undertakings

which John Parker Hepworth is wont to launch into from time to time—on foot.

And these surmises are correct, except in this particular, that two big enterprises are under consideration and not merely one.

Vast as are the operations in connection with the great pork packing and canned meat establishment, with its manifold ramifications; tremendous as is the volume of business in connection with the widely advertised and widely famed "Clover Leaf Brand"—it is all not enough to fully engross the attention and satisfy the spirit of speculative enterprise of this Napoleon of commerce. Hence it is that from time to time he enters into large outside speculative and commercial schemes, not a few of which have set the whole financial community a-talking, and most of which he has so far managed to conduct to a highly satisfactory conclusion, alike from an administrative and from a financial standpoint.

On this particular occasion two undertakings are, as already stated, under consideration. The first relates to the building of a long stretch of railroad through a certain section of the southwest—a plan the carrying through of which will materially affect the interests of several large rail-

road systems and cause no little flutter in the stock markets ; the other concerns no less a subject than the "cornering" of the tobacco crop.

The railroad matter has been under discussion throughout the morning, and negotiations are so far advanced that a final conference is to be held and a decision reached at noon on the following day. The tobacco question is now under consideration, and Mr. Hepworth's present visitor is a well-known capitalist, himself the head of a great tobacco firm.

"I tell you, sir," declares the latter, "that the moment is literally a golden one—that never before has such a favorable opportunity offered itself. The Cuba crop for the past two seasons has been well-nigh an utter failure ; this year the crop is excellent as to quality, but small, sir ; decidedly small. Under these conditions, I say that the whole supply can be cornered with comparatively little difficulty."

"I agree with you in many respects," answers Mr. Hepworth, thoughtfully ; "your views being largely borne out by the information I have caused to be gathered on this subject. What, though, about the supply obtainable through the recent cultivation of tobacco in Florida ?"

"A matter entirely in the hands of one house—the Owl Company!"

"Precisely, and a most enterprising concern this same Owl Company—one commanding large resources and capable of conducting a very skilful and very energetic opposition."

"I admit it—I admit it fully; but this tobacco cultivation in Florida is a very recently revived industry, and is as yet maintained on only a comparatively small scale. It has been attended by marked success, I concede, and is being rapidly extended, but as yet the supply is not of sufficient magnitude to offer any serious obstacles to our plans."

"You are confident of this? *There* will be, I am convinced, the chief and only source of serious opposition."

"Absolutely confident; I have thoroughly investigated the matter."

"Very well. How much my share in the proposed pool?"

"A million and a quarter for each of the three associates in the combination, subject to the conditions already outlined."

Mr. Hepworth comes to the point with characteristic rapidity.

"You shall have my answer by Thursday noon," he says.

His visitor, likewise a busy man sparing of his words, at once rises.

"Understood—Thursday noon!" he exclaims, and an instant later he is off.

Left alone, Mr. Hepworth glances over several business papers, makes a few rapid calculations, and then proceeds to consult some letters laid aside from the morning mail for further reference. Among these communications, and in striking contrast to the large business-like envelopes in which they are enclosed, is one little letter bearing foreign post-marks and evidently addressed by a female hand. An unimportant appearing communication this beside its serious looking companions, yet the head of the house devotes an appreciably longer time to its re-perusal than has been given to any of the others.

It is from Edith—a letter written from Bordighera and received by the first mail that morning. It is a letter brimming over with girlish enthusiasm. Everything is couched in a strongly eulogistic vein. The air, the skies, the scenery are simply "exquisite;" Aunt Kate, too, is "just lovely;" the strange sights, the picturesque

people interest her "so immensely;" she is enjoying herself "so much." Then follows a detailed narration of how she has been spending her time. She tells of a visit to the famous Monte Carlo, interspersed with numerous entertaining observations of the various sights she has come across, and how they have impressed her; and there are numerous references to a certain Baron Barr and his brother, Baron Alexander, "who asks such funny questions about America." The whole letter breathes of a spirit of thorough enjoyment and happiness, and seems to reflect the glad warmth and gay sunshine of the fair land in which she is sojourning.

And it is this simple, girlish letter that has influenced this busy man of affairs to impatiently thrust aside communications dealing with weighty commercial transactions, and give to its reading for the second time a good quarter of an hour of his much occupied afternoon.

At last, with a half sigh, he puts the letter down and reluctantly turns again to questions of business. Presently he touches the handbell on his desk. Instantly a clerk appears:

"Ask Mr. Jennings to come to me."

"Yes, sir."

A few minutes later Mr. Jennings presents himself.

"Has the statement of the resources we may count upon commanding in that railroad matter been prepared?" asks the head of the house.

"All ready, sir," answers Mr. Jennings, displaying a batch of papers.

"Let me hear it, please."

Mr. Jennings selects a document liberally covered with figures, and has just opened his mouth to begin when there is a tap on the door.

Mr. Jennings steps to the door to ascertain the cause of the interruption.

"A cablegram," he explains a moment later, turning back into the room with the dispatch in his hand.

Mr. Hepworth takes it, and as he happens to carelessly glance at the superscription he notes with a slight astonishment that it bears his name and address in full, instead of the ordinary single word comprising the cable address of the house. Evidently not from one of his regular foreign correspondents! is the thought that passes through his mind.

Leisurely turning over the envelope, he breaks it open and unfolds the dispatch. Mr. Jennings,

a few feet away, stands watching him and waiting to begin the reading of his papers. Suddenly, he sees his principal's eyes dilate as he reads, his face flushes and then grows pale, and he drops back in his chair with a half-smothered gasp. In an instant more, however, he has recovered himself and is on his feet, holding the dispatch tightly clutched in his hand.

"Mr. Jennings," he exclaims, huskily, "I find myself called away—I must leave Chicago at once."

"And the negotiations, sir?" asks the ever practical Mr. Jennings.

Mr. Hepworth stares at him, as if hardly grasping the meaning of the words. Suddenly, however, as with an effort, he pulls himself together.

"They are off, Mr. Jennings," he exclaims, in a steadier voice and with rising inflection, "off, both of them. I start for Europe within the hour."

"Any bad news, sir?" ventures Mr. Jennings, anxiously.

"Yes, Mr. Jennings, bad news, very bad news—the worst news in the world that could come to me. My girl, my poor little girl—she is—I fear—ill."

The unsteadiness has again come into his voice; he shivers as a man struck by a sudden blast of cold air.

* * * * *

Four hours later Mr. Hepworth is speeding across the country as fast as special engine and car can take him, bent upon catching the first outgoing fast steamer for Liverpool. As he dashes through the gathering darkness, he reads for the twentieth time the dispatch received that afternoon, as if to glean some further meaning from its contents. It is from Mrs. Patterson, and contains simply these five words:

SOMETHING SERIOUS EDITH. COME IMMEDIATELY.

Before leaving Chicago, he has caused the following cablegram to be sent to Mrs. Patterson:

Have left on special train for New York. Is Edith ill? Much alarmed. Cable full details to Buffalo care Conductor Special.

Throughout the journey to Buffalo he knows no rest. What news will await him when he reaches that point? Perhaps none, he reflects dismally. Perhaps there may be some delay, and

he may have to wait for further news until he arrives at New York.

This fear, however, proves groundless, for at Buffalo the special is signalled and the conductor comes to him with the anxiously expected cable. He tears it open, and his straining eyes read :

NO ILLNESS, BUT SOMETHING VERY SERIOUS.
COME WITHOUT FAIL AT ONCE.

Twenty-four hours later he is on the high seas.

CHAPTER II.

MRS. PATTERSON'S STORY.

ARRIVED at Liverpool, Mr. Hepworth, who has taken the precaution of cabling from New York the steamer by which he sails, receives a telegram from Mrs. Patterson informing him that she and Edith are awaiting him in London, where they have engaged rooms for themselves and him at Morley's Hotel.

This telegram comes to him as a sort of joyful surprise. The distance of separation between Edith and him is so much the shorter; he will so much the sooner find himself at her side. Moreover, the fact that she has been able to journey from Bordighera to London goes at least to show she cannot be suffering from any acute or dangerous illness.

In spite of Mrs. Patterson's second cable, Mr. Hepworth has been unable to rid himself of the thought that Edith is ill; that she is threatened by some physical danger. This has been the idea uppermost in his mind throughout the

journey across the ocean. To have, therefore, proof of the fact that she is up and about, as shown by her presence in London, comes to him as a great relief and his spirits take an upward bound.

As the train clears the outskirts of Liverpool and dashes on its way through the beautiful English shires, with their trim fields and neat boxwood hedges, a puzzling reflection which has already repeatedly presented itself to him while on the sea returns with added force. If Edith is really not ill, why then has he been so urgently sent for? What else than serious illness could warrant such an imperative summons as Mrs. Patterson has sent him? Puzzle as he may, however, he can arrive at no satisfactory explanation on this score, and at last he resolutely puts the conundrum out of his head, feeling more calm now that he is so rapidly nearing the moment of its solution.

Reaching London, he causes the very modest baggage which he has taken with him in his hasty departure from Chicago to be transported to the roof of a hansom cab, and jumping inside is driven at the best speed of a London cab-horse to Morley's.

Arrived there, he finds Mrs. Patterson awaiting him in the parlor of the *suite* of rooms which she has engaged. Mr. Hepworth's first eager glance into his sister's face does not reassure him ; she looks decidedly worried and anxious.

"Where is Edith?" he asks, quickly.

"She is here; in her room," answers Mrs. Patterson.

"Doesn't she know I am here? Let me go to her!" exclaims Mr. Hepworth, eagerly.

"No, no," interposes Mrs. Patterson, quickly, anxiously. "I have to speak to you first."

"Speak to me! Well, well; what is it?"

"John," exclaims Mrs. Patterson, "if you keep walking up and down the room like that I cannot talk to you. It makes me too nervous. Please sit down," she continues, gravely, "I have much to say to you."

Mr. Hepworth, however, seems loth to obey this injunction.

"Kate," he declares, "I will tell you frankly that I am just dying with impatience to see my little girl. If you are afraid that you have acted a little too hastily in sending for me, that there was not sufficient cause for your cabling as you did, spare yourself the trouble of

making any explanations. I feel so happy over hearing that my girl is not ill, so glad over seeing her again, that I will freely and fully forgive everything. There ; is not that enough? Now let me see her."

Mrs. Patterson looks at him and there is pity in her eyes.

"It is not as you think, John," she says, slowly. "I wish to Heaven it were so! I have not sent for you causelessly; I have something very serious, very distressing, to communicate to you."

Mr. Hepworth glances at her sharply. He is struck by the earnestness of her manner.

"You are not deceiving me?" he cries quickly, and there is an agonized ring in his voice. "Edith is not ill?"

"No."

"What is it then?" he continues, with some impatience. "You see how anxious I am. Why not come to the point? Why keep me waiting?"

Mrs. Patterson's lips tremble and tears come into her eyes. Noticing this and believing he has wounded her by the brusqueness of his manner, Hepworth is filled with compunction.

"There, there," he exclaims, soothingly, going

to her and seating himself at her side. "Please forgive me for being so impatient, but I have been in such a state of anxiety since the receipt of your first cable that my nerves are all upset. Now, don't cry any more, but turn this way and tell me all you want to say. I promise to be patient."

To Mr. Hepworth's unbounded surprise, these words have precisely the opposite effect from that anticipated. Instead of being soothed, Mrs. Patterson bows her head and bursts into tears.

"Oh, John! oh, John!" she moans. "How can I ever tell you!"

Mr. Hepworth is very calm now. Evidently there is, he realizes, something really serious—so serious that the dread of its narration has brought his sister to the verge of hysterics. Like a sensible man he sees that this is a case of the more haste, the less speed. No use to goad her on and hurry her; the best way is to let her take her time.

Following out this line of action, he gradually soothes her into calmer mood, and at last she is in condition to speak.

Then, brokenly and in disjointed fragments,

intermingled with tears, the horrible story is gradually drawn from her lips.

She tells of their visit to Bordighera and of their meeting there two young noblemen, who claimed to be brothers, and one of whom had come to her well recommended by friends in London. Disarmed by these letters of introduction and by the highly respectful demeanor and polished courtesy of these young nobles, she had permitted a friendly intimacy to establish itself. Not being able to go about much herself at the time, owing to the condition of her health, and fearing that Edith would be dull in this quiet Italian village, she had allowed her to go out in company of these two young men—always properly accompanied, of course, either by Mrs. Enright as chaperon, or by a servant in attendance.

All had gone well for quite a time, nothing in the young men's conduct furnishing the slightest cause for suspicion or complaint. They were invariably high-bred, polite, deferential, one of them, the Baron Alexander, being apparently deeply impressed with Edith and having finally pressed his suit to the point of a proposal. What ground would there be under these cir-

cumstances for suspecting anything wrong? How could either she or Edith be blamed for not detecting the treachery that lurked?

And what treachery was this—treachery of so foul and criminal a nature that it was hardly to be credited as possible in a man not belonging to the most abject class! One day, while out riding, he who was known as Baron Alexander had, under a plausible pretext, lured Edith into the house of a person declared to be a relative; the groom had been deceived by a spurious message purporting to come from her; she had been robbed of her senses under the guise of an innocent refreshment tendered in the name of hospitality; a vile crime against her had followed.

Mr. Hepworth rises from his chair, and a cry, like that of some wild beast in pain, breaks from him.

Mrs. Patterson, overcome by the force of her emotions, breaks anew into tears.

“Go on,” he whispers, hoarsely; “go on.”

It is some minutes, however, before Mrs. Patterson can continue.

“It was long after darkness had set in,” she resumes at last, when Edith returned to her. The girl came back in a hired conveyance—

wild-eyed, incoherent, half-unconscious, apparently still partially stupefied by some powerful drug.

Hours passed before anything intelligible could be learned from her. When at last she had been enabled to gather from Edith's words some conception of the hideous crime which had been perpetrated, she, acting on the first impulse, had at once sent for the chief officer of the local police. This official had manifested deep concern and horror and had immediately started out to investigate the matter. Three hours later he had returned, and had made startling disclosures. He who had figured as Baron Alexander, a French nobleman, was, it appeared, nothing of the kind. He was in reality a prince of royal blood—His Royal Highness, Prince Raoul Alexander, heir apparent to the throne of H——. The accuracy of this information was subsequently verified by the receipt of a communication from this so-called Baron Alexander addressed to Edith—a few vile, cruel lines in which he incidentally disclosed his true identity, apparently confident of his high station securing him absolute immunity from his crime.

"*A-a-h!*" comes the exclamation from Mr.

Hepworth, and in it alike surprise and rage are blended.

In spite of the exalted rank of this personage, Mrs. Patterson continues, resuming her painful recital, she had demanded of the police functionary his immediate apprehension. The official, who seemed greatly perplexed by this demand, had thereupon informed her that the Prince, as also his base female accomplice, had seemingly taken their departure immediately after the perpetration of the crime. Furthermore, the offence had been committed on French, not Italian soil, and in any event he could not take action in a case involving a personage of this importance without consulting his superiors. He had advised her to lay the matter before the nearest American consul, or the American Minister at Rome. Thoroughly worn out with sorrow and anxiety, and not daring to venture any further action on her own responsibility, she had then sent the cable to Chicago. The Prince, she subsequently learned, had returned to Paris, where he now was.

At last, everything told to the bitter end, Mrs. Patterson comes to a close and looks with tear-suffused eyes toward her brother. He sits motionless in his chair, his hands tightly clutching

the back on either side, his head bowed upon his breast. She goes to him and lays her hand compassionately on his shoulder. At her touch, he starts and looks up.

"Kate," he whispers, "I want to be alone. Put me somewhere where I shall be alone."

"Come," she answers, simply, and shows him to the apartment already prepared for his reception.

Two hours pass before he returns to the room where Mrs. Patterson is sorrowfully awaiting him.

"Let me see her now," he says, in a low voice.

Silently she rises and leaves the room, returning a moment later leading Edith by the hand.

What a change from the blithesome, sunny-eyed girl he parted from that bright May day in Chicago! She comes toward him now with slow, hesitating steps, her head bowed, the color all out of her cheeks, her eyelids red and swollen as from long weeping.

In an instant, Hepworth is beside her, and has gathered her in his arms, while she, sinking her head upon his shoulder, is crying as if her heart would break.

"My darling," he murmurs, brokenly, and tenderly caressing her hair, "my own, sweet

darling, do not weep. You were never so much to me, I never loved you so dearly as to-day."

* * * * *

Throughout the greater part of that night Mrs. Patterson, whose room adjoins Hepworth's, hears him walking up and down. Not long after daybreak, he is again up and about. Hastily slipping on a wrapper, she steps out of her room and knocks at his door. He at once opens, and to her surprise, she finds him fully dressed, his packed valise resting on a chair.

"What!" she exclaims, glancing at these evident preparations for departure; "you surely do not think of leaving us already—so soon!"

"Yes," he answers, briefly, "I leave by the early train for France—for Paris."

"For Paris, John?" she stammers, bewildered. "For Paris! What for?"

He turns upon her fiercely, the swollen veins standing out in great knots in his forehead and temples, his bloodshot eyes glaring darkly into hers.

"I am going," he hisses, between his set teeth, "to seek justice—justice from the defiler of my girl!"

CHAPTER III.

“THIS VENGEANCE IS MINE!”

ON the morning of the day succeeding that of his departure from London, Mr. Hepworth presents himself at the American Legation in Paris.

In answer to his request to see the Minister, a lackey in attendance informs him that the Minister is confined to his bed by illness. Does he wish to see Mr. Halstead, the First Secretary of Legation?

“Mr. George Gorman Halstead?” inquires Mr. Hepworth.

“Yes, sir.”

Mr. Hepworth's face brightens. The First Secretary is well known to him; he and the First Secretary's father are old-time friends.

“Take in my name, please,” he says, handing the lackey his card.

An instant later he has been shown in to Mr. Halstead's room and the latter is warmly shaking his hand.

“I saw your name in the list of arrivals at the

Grand Hotel," he exclaims, cordially, "and you would have had a visit from me during the day. You have forestalled me, though, I see."

"Yes; I wished to consult the Legation confidentially, upon a matter of deep importance to me."

"Ah," laughs the First Secretary; "I hardly flattered myself that your call was simply a social visit. I know what a busy man you are—every minute counts! You want to see us, I suppose, in connection with some question appertaining to your business relations with this country—the new rates on imports, eh? Well; that is, you know, a branch of affairs more directly in the province of the Consular Department, but still I've no doubt we can manage to be of some use to you."

Mr. Hepworth waits patiently and in silence while Halstead, evidently overjoyed at the sight of a friendly face fresh from home, rattles thus gayly on, little suspecting the storm of grief and anger raging within his visitor's breast.

"No," answers Mr. Hepworth, very gravely, as the First Secretary ceases speaking, "I have not come to you on any questions of business, but for advice on a personal matter which is, as I have already said, of a most serious nature."

"It shall have, then, our most serious consideration," answers the First Secretary, "and I think, in behalf of the Legation, I may promise in advance our most active interest and co-operation."

"Anything I may say I wish to have regarded as most strictly confidential," observes Mr. Hepworth.

"It shall be so understood," is Halstead's answer, as he draws his chair nearer to his visitor and waits for him to begin.

Mr. Hepworth sits for some instants, his eyes bent upon the ground, apparently choosing the words with which to open this communication he has to make.

"I have come," he says at last, "to seek information as to precisely what chances of legal redress an American citizen stands under the following circumstances. A member of this citizen's family—a minor directly under his guardianship—has been the victim of a heinous crime, a crime of the most fiendish and revolting character, perpetrated by a person occupying here a high rank. The person in question is, I understand, the son of a king and the heir to a throne."

"Phew!" whistles the First Secretary, aston-

ished. "By what means, may I ask, is it proposed to seek this legal redress?"

"By means of a criminal prosecution, of course."

"What! You are not serious?"

"Serious! I never was so much so in all my life."

"And the crime—what is its nature?"

"Let us suppose it is a crime parallel in magnitude to murder."

"Even so: and the offender a prince, the son of a reigning monarch?"

"Precisely."

"Why, my dear Mr. Hepworth," answers Halstead, with a deprecatory wave of the hand, "let me say to you frankly that in such a case there is not the slightest chance of the aggrieved person securing any such legal satisfaction as you speak of. It is folly to dream of such a thing."

"You think so?"

"I am only too sure of it. It would not be possible to induce the authorities to even consider any such line of action in a case involving a personage of this prominence. If the aggrieved person in question makes a complaint he will encounter insurmountable obstacles on every

side and will simply have his trouble for his pains. The authorities with whom he comes in contact will pooh-pooh his grievance. If necessary, they will demonstrate to him that black is white, and will insist that he is laboring under some gross delusion; that what he alleges, as a matter of fact, never took place. In a word, he will have no chance whatever of securing even a serious consideration of his charges."

"There is no sense of justice here then?"

"I do not say that, not at least in a general way. In this instance, though, just remember who the offender is. A prince—a Royal Highness!"

"Still, a man!"

"Yes; a man, but a man of royal blood, related no doubt to half the crowned heads in Europe. You don't imagine for a moment, do you, that in behalf of this American citizen the government of France is going to get itself into a snarl with half-a-dozen other European nations? A Royal Highness in the felon's dock, on trial on a criminal charge! Why, such an idea would simply be laughed at here."

"But is not France a Republic?"

"Yes; a republic of yesterday, still imbued

to the core with respect for blood, rank, social prerogative, and all the rest of the appurtenances of the monarchical idea. No; believe me, there is nothing to be done in this matter."

"I anticipated all this you have told me," answers Mr. Hepworth, making a motion to rise, "but I still wished to have the Legation's advice."

"One moment!" exclaims Halstead; "you seem particularly interested in this matter. May I ask if it is one in which you are personally concerned?"

"Yes," rejoins Mr. Hepworth in a low voice, "most directly and most vitally concerned."

Halstead reflects an instant.

"You know the old adage," he says, presently, "that a man should conceal nothing from his doctor or his lawyer. The particulars you have so far given me of this case are quite vague. I am very anxious to be of service to you. Will you not put me in possession of the full facts? I may, perhaps, be able to make some suggestion."

Mr. Hepworth hesitates.

"It is understood, you know," continues Halstead, reassuringly, "that everything is in the strictest confidence."

Mr. Hepworth appears to suddenly make up his mind.

"Yes," he says, "I will tell you. Surely," he continues, as if in answer to his own thoughts, "no shame can attach itself to the innocent victim of this most dastardly crime."

Then, slowly and impressively, very deliberately and very graphically, he relates in substance—omitting only any mention of names—the story narrated to him by Mrs. Patterson. At times his voice varies slightly in its inflection; now, rising somewhat above the pitch of its ordinary tones, then, again, sinking almost into a whisper; but there is no visible sign of excitement, no outward exhibition of anger. This story thus told becomes all the more dramatic and terrible from the simple directness and earnestness of its relation.

The effect of this recital upon Halstead is far more marked and startling than upon the actual narrator.

Almost with the opening words, Halstead bends eagerly forward, his interest apparently strained to absolutely painful intensity. As the story proceeds, his face alternately flushes and pales, and sudden tremors pass over him. Pres-

ently, seemingly unable to longer restrain his nervousness, he rises and begins to pace up and down the room.

At last, as Mr. Hepworth reaches the culminating point in his recital, Halstead suddenly turns upon the speaker and sharply interrupts him.

"This place—this place where they were stopping," he cries, hoarsely. "Was it—was it Bordighera?"

"Yes," answers Mr. Hepworth, slowly, "you have guessed correctly."

"And she—the girl! Was it your daughter—Edith—?"

Mr. Hepworth's face contracts sharply, as if under some sudden pain.

"Why speak the name?" he murmurs, brokenly. "Of what use—"

In the intensity of his excitement, Halstead appears to lose all control of himself.

"You must, you shall answer me," he cries, fiercely. "I have a right to know!"

"Yes," whispers Mr. Hepworth, with bowed head.

Halstead reels back, his hands clenched, his face ghastly.

"Oh, my God—my God!" he cries, in a voice in which horror and agony are alike blended.

"And you," exclaims Mr. Hepworth, rising; "you! By what right have you demanded to know?"

"By the right, sir," answers Halstead, with a passionate outburst, "that I love her—that I have hoped to some day win her for my wife!"

He stands there, looking toward Mr. Hepworth, hollow-eyed, despairing. Presently, a great wave of anger surges up within him.

"And this man—this prince!" he exclaims. "Who was he?"

"He is styled here Prince Raoul Alexander, of H——," answers Mr. Hepworth, bitterly.

"And his accomplice?"

"One Baron Barr."

"Ah!" rejoins Halstead, with savage emphasis, "he, at least, is not a prince and beyond our reach, thank God! He, at least, shall reckon with me."

But at these words John Parker Hepworth suddenly comes toward him, menacing, terrible.

"No," he cries, ominously; "I forbid you to interfere."

“You forbid me?”

“Yes; I forbid you. I claim these men—
this vengeance, as mine. You shall not come
between me and my vengeance!”

CHAPTER IV.

JUSTICE WITHOUT HER BANDAGE.

"As I have already said to you," declares Mr. Hepworth, when the two men have somewhat recovered their wonted composure, "I anticipated much of what you have told me. Comparatively slight as is my acquaintance with European customs, I yet know enough of them to realize the difficulties there would be in securing redress in a case such as this one. I did not wish, however, to trust to my own ideas alone, but desired to have them confirmed from a reliable source. Hence my visit here. You thus perceive I am willing to give law and organized justice every opportunity for action, before resorting to other measures."

"Before resorting to other measures! That means—?"

"Before taking justice into my own hands."

"But how?"

"Leave that to me. Will you furnish me with a note of introduction to the Minister of

Justice, so that I may lay my case before him?"

"With pleasure. I warn you, though, that your visit will be useless. It will lead to no result."

"I fully agree with you. Still, I wish to carry out this formality."

Halstead seats himself at a table and rapidly dashes off a note on the Legation's official paper to the French Minister of Justice.

"There," he exclaims, handing the letter to Mr. Hepworth, "that will at least ensure you an audience; but remember, I have warned you against disappointment. And, by the way," he adds, anxiously, "you will be careful as to how you expose yourself to danger from these men. You will be cautious, if only for *her* sake, won't you?"

"Do not fear," rejoins Hepworth; "a man who has faced Southern shot and steel in half-a-dozen of the great battles of our late war, to say nothing of innumerable hot skirmishes, and who has had the experience that I have had on the plains, has not much to fear physically, it seems to me, from two cowardly miscreants such as these, who doubtless never in their lives faced an enemy in earnest."

"You are mistaken," answers Halstead; "you underrate your adversary. Baron Barr, for instance, is quite a noted duelist. He is an expert swordsman; has fought a number of duels, and whatever else may be said of the man, he is at least no coward. I wish you would let me settle the score with him. Since I have been here," he adds, grimly, "I have made a special study of this game of fashionable homicide. I may say that I am considered an expert with the foils."

Mr. Hepworth makes a deprecatory gesture.

"Take care of them," again urges Halstead; "I believe this Baron Barr, whom I have often met, to be very cunning, very treacherous."

"Cunning—treacherous!" retorts Mr. Hepworth, "do you believe that they are any more cunning, or treacherous than the shrewd men of commerce, the unscrupulous operators of finance, whom I am accustomed to meet and vie with every day at home? As for duelling," he adds, with a faint smile, and as he shakes Halstead's hand and turns to leave, "you forget that fencing has for years been a favorite form of exercise with me. As President of the Fencers' Club of Chicago, I certainly ought to be able to take care of myself in that direction."

From the Legation, Mr. Hepworth goes direct to the bureau of the Minister of Justice. The letter of which he is the bearer from the First Secretary of the American Legation secures him prompt attention, and he is admitted with little delay to the presence of the Minister, a tall, angular man, of solemn mien, who scans his visitor critically through a pair of gold-rimmed glasses.

Mr. Hepworth explains the object of his visit and states the circumstances of the case as he has already detailed them to Halstead, the Minister listening with due attention and interrupting his visitor now and then with some brief question to the point. The story finished, the Minister remains silent for some instants, his head resting thoughtfully on his hand.

"And what is it you ask me to do?" he inquires presently, looking up with a somewhat puzzled air.

"As it would be obviously useless," answers Mr. Hepworth, "to apply to the local authorities of the place where the crime was committed, I have come to you as the chief officer of the Department of Justice to set the machinery of the law in motion."

"But how? What do you imply by that?"

"I demand the arrest of this man, who is now here in Paris, and his transportation to San Raphael to be there tried for his offence."

"*Mon Dieu !*" exclaims the Minister, in undisguised astonishment. "You expect us to do this! You expect us to summarily arrest the Prince?"

"That, sir, is my object in coming to you. Otherwise, what excuse could there be for my taking up your time?" answers Mr. Hepworth, coldly.

Having recovered from his first astonishment, the Minister quickly settles back into his ordinary stiff, official bearing. The case is one, he declares, in which he could under no circumstances consent to act with any undue haste. He must have time for investigation, for careful consideration of this really very unusual exigency.

He at first evinces a disposition to take the stand that he cannot set any definite limit as to the length of time this investigation and accompanying consideration will occupy, but under Mr. Hepworth's vigorous persistence, he finally agrees to arrive at some decision within ten days.

Mr. Hepworth waits with all the patience he can summon together for the expiration of these

ten days. In the meantime, he is not entirely idle. He causes certain inquiries to be set on foot, and is soon well acquainted with the movements and mode of life of Prince Raoul Alexander, and of his almost inseparable companion, Baron Barr. They are, he finds, leading a more than gay form of existence, exhausting all the pleasures and frivolities of Paris, preparatory to the Prince's departure on an extended voyage to foreign lands on the yacht fitted out for him by the government of H——. This yacht, it is expected, will be ready to go into commission within a few weeks.

At the expiration of the time appointed, Mr. Hepworth again waits upon the Minister of Justice. The upshot of the interview is in accordance with Halstead's prediction. The Minister is exceedingly polite, excessively amiable; but—that is all! He refers in a general way, and in very guarded terms, to “absence of sufficient proof,” “questions of public policy,” “the necessity of great caution,” etc., etc., and concludes by declaring in substance that he does not see his way to any action in the case.

Mr. Hepworth hears him to the end and then rises.

"You refuse, then, to punish this criminal?" he asks.

The Minister protests; he objects to allowing the matter to be put in this form. Mr. Hepworth pays little attention to the protest, and somewhat abruptly withdraws.

This application to the head of the Department of Justice is, however, not destined to remain entirely without result. Immediately after Mr. Hepworth's first visit, the Minister, feeling the case to be one of unusual importance, communicated with the Department of Foreign Affairs, which in turn consulted with the Embassy of H—. The Embassy, of course, at once sent lengthy cipher dispatches on the subject to the home authorities, who, fearing the outbreak of a serious scandal, hastened to lay the matter before the King. His Majesty, greatly concerned, had at once dispatched Baron von Bieler to Paris to confer with the Embassy, and see what measures might best be taken to stifle the threatened scandal. His Majesty had furthermore issued additional orders for pushing forward the work on the yacht with all possible rapidity.

Within an hour after his return from the visit to the Minister of Justice, a card is brought to

Mr. Hepworth, bearing the name of Baron von Bieler. He cannot recall the name as that of any person with whom he has acquaintance; but, always readily accessible, he directs that the visitor be shown to the parlor of his private *suite*.

CHAPTER V.

A QUESTION OF CASH.

HAVING briefly introduced himself, in really excellent English, as sent by the State Department of H—— to Paris on a special mission, Baron von Bieler approaches cautiously the object of his visit.

"Some days ago," he begins, with diplomatic suavity, "you made, I believe, certain representations to the French Department of Justice?"

"Yes; I applied for the apprehension of a criminal," answers Mr. Hepworth, coldly.

"The application was, you will doubtless admit, one attended by somewhat peculiar circumstances," continues Baron von Bieler, passing over the sting in Mr. Hepworth's words.

"No; I hardly admit that," rejoins Mr. Hepworth. "The circumstances to my mind were only peculiar in so far as they related to the unusual heinousness of the crime."

"Still," persists Baron von Bieler, in the same conciliatory strain, "you must concede that the

rank of the person against whom you bore complaint causes the case to assume certain peculiar features—features quite out of the ordinary course.”

“I cannot concede,” answers Mr. Hepworth, stubbornly, “that this man’s rank in any way palliates his offence. But, even conceding all you say,—what then?”

Baron von Bieler appears somewhat disconcerted by this abrupt bringing of matters to the point.

“May I ask,” he continues, after a momentary pause, “what was the precise object of these representations made by you to the Department of Justice?”

“The bringing of this man to account for his crime, of course!” answers Mr. Hepworth, curtly.

“Mr. Hepworth,” declares Baron von Bieler, impressively, “you are an American, the citizen of a Republic, and as such it is readily to be understood that you are neither in sympathy with nor fully comprehend the ideas and methods that prevail in monarchical lands. Without going into the merits of this case, let me say to you briefly, and in all kindliness of intent, that there can be no satisfactory outcome to the line of

action you have been pursuing. Why not, therefore, spare yourself effort that can lead to nothing and only be fruitful of general embarrassment—embarrassment to you, to the French authorities, and to the government which I have the honor of representing. Let us rather see if there is really no feasible way in which reparation can be made you?”

“For instance?”

“For instance, in a pecuniary way—in the form of indemnification—if you will permit the suggestion.”

John Parker Hepworth does not even deign to get angry.

“My dear sir,” he answers, almost pityingly, “you have no idea of what you are offering. Even if I were base enough to be willing to consider your proposition, it would be entirely out of the power of your government to offer suitable reparation in the form you speak of.”

“How so?” asks Baron von Bieler, puzzled.

“You haven’t the necessary cash,” answers the American, bluntly.

“I do not quite understand!” declares Baron von Bieler, a slight haughtiness in his tone.

“Why, my dear sir,” retorts Mr. Hepworth,

"the matter is simple enough. My monthly pay-roll falls little short of the sum total of your annual budget. In one section of the United States alone," he continues, with almost careless contempt, "I possess, free and unencumbered, a straight, unbroken tract of land more than double the size of your country. And you speak to me of pecuniary compensation! You haven't the means, I say."

The royal envoy stares in undisguised amaze, dumfounded by the enormous resources of this simple American citizen, before whose majestic possessions those of more than one European crowned head sink by comparison into pettiness and insignificance.

"You are right," he murmurs at last, almost humbly, "my offer must indeed seem to you meaningless. Is there no other way?"

"I can conceive only one other."

"It is?" saks Baron von Bieler, eagerly.

"That this man should redeem, as far as lies in his power, his offence by marriage."

"Impossible!" cries Baron von Bieler, hopelessly; "quite impossible, for reasons of state."

"Oh," answers the American, carelessly, "as far as that is concerned my daughter would in-

terfere very little with your state affairs, for I would never permit her, nor would she consent, to live with this man as wife. Immediately after the marriage she would withdraw to the United States, and a divorce might be sought by her after a reasonable time. In this suggestion, let me assure you, I seek only a means of honorable reparation—nothing more.”

“Impossible !” again exclaims Baron von Bieler, “utterly impossible. According to our customs, royalty can only, save in highly exceptional cases, ally itself to royalty. The Prince, I assure you, were he ever so eager, could not contract such a union.”

“So much the worse for him, then !”

“How so—what do you mean ?”

“I mean,” answers the American, sternly, “that if he refuses me that justice which the law here denies me, I will take justice into my own hands. I will kill him.”

“Ah !”

“Yes ; he shall give me reparation—answer to me as man to man—or I will kill him like the dog that he is !”

CHAPTER VI.

MAN TO MAN.

"WHAT do you think, *mon cher!*" exclaims Raoul Alexander to Baron Barr as the latter joins him as usual at breakfast. "I have great news for you. I have been challenged."

"By whom?"

"Ah, that's the most interesting part of it. The individual who aspires to the honor of a meeting is none other than a certain Mr. Hepworth, of Chicago!"

Baron Barr bursts into a loud laugh.

"Ha, ha! A royal highness challenged by a pork-monger! Who shall say that we do not live in the days of democracy run mad? Why, the next thing we know we shall be subject to a challenge from our tailor, or our shoemaker, whenever we have the temerity to disagree with them as to the fit of a coat, or a pair of boots. In what terms did you couch your reply?"

"Oh," answers Raoul Alexander, carelessly, "I was good-natured about it. I simply ex-

pressed my regret at being unable to give the matter consideration."

"And who was the bearer of this absurd cartel?"

"The English milord Clavering—an eccentric, as you know, accompanied by another whose name I forget."

"Lord Clavering," comments Baron Barr; "if I remember aright, he is at the head of a London banking-house. He is doubtless under some obligations of a financial kind to this American pork man, and hence his acceptance of this ridiculous mission."

"The most ridiculous part of it," declares Raoul Alexander, "was the seriousness with which he carried out his part. As he took his departure he actually had the impudence to tell me, with an air of much earnestness, that he feared I would regret my decision—that he feared my refusal would lead to serious trouble."

"Serious trouble," echoes Baron Barr; "what nonsense! Who ever heard of so much fuss, just because a royal highness happened to indulge a fancy for the daughter of a man of the people. How the times are changed! Why, if we had lived only a couple of generations ago, and your

Highness had graciously deigned to hint at a thought for this girl, I, Baron Barr, as your faithful follower, would have quietly snatched her up some fine evening as she was strolling abroad. And there would have been very little fuss about it either!"

"Unfortunately," answers Raoul Alexander, with a laugh, "we live somewhat late to enjoy all the benefits of the good old times, and to-day there seems to be a good deal of fuss made over these little matters."

"And suppose there is!" exclaims Baron Barr; "it need not ruffle your Highness' serenity. As for this dealer in pigs, should he really make himself obnoxious, I can readily find some pretext for seeking a quarrel with him. There will be a quiet meeting next morning, and a well-directed shot, or a neat sword-thrust, will quickly put a stop to further annoyance. He, no doubt, is a good deal more skilful in the management of hogs than of a sword, or a duelling pistol."

"Not a bad idea," laughs Raoul Alexander. "I dare say, though, we shall manage to get rid of him without putting you to all this trouble."

They sit down to breakfast together, dismissing

the subject without further discussion as one really not worthy of any extended attention.

Toward three o'clock that afternoon Raoul Alexander steps into his victoria, and orders his coachman to drive to the club which he now and then frequents, Baron Barr remaining behind to attend to some correspondence he has woefully neglected, and declaring he will join Raoul Alexander at the club later. As the victoria starts out Raoul Alexander fails to notice that a closed carriage, which has been waiting some distance up the street, immediately starts in pursuit and follows close in the wake of the victoria.

As the victoria draws up in front of the club and Raoul Alexander steps out, with a friendly bow to a number of acquaintances whom he sees at the windows, he finds himself confronted by a tall, well-dressed man, to him an utter stranger.

"Prince Raoul Alexander?" exclaims this stranger, abruptly, without even raising his hat.

Raoul Alexander, nodding curtly, stares blankly at the speaker.

"I am," continues the stranger firmly, and very self-possessed, "Mr. John Parker Hepworth. I wish a few words with you."

Raoul Alexander, utterly taken by surprise,

involuntarily starts, but quickly recovers himself.

"I am not accustomed," he answers, haughtily, "to have strangers accost me on the sidewalk. If you have any communication to make to me, you must present it in the usual way."

As he speaks, he makes a movement to pass, without devoting further attention to the person addressing him.

"You shall give me the answer I seek here and now," declares the American, a sudden huskiness in his voice, and extending the cane which he holds in his hand so as to prevent Raoul Alexander from passing.

"What answer?" demands Raoul Alexander, with a sneer.

"The answer to the communication sent to you this morning through my friends."

"Bah!" exclaims Raoul Alexander, with a contemptuous motion. "Let me pass, I say."

"You shall not pass till you answer."

In a sudden impulse of anger, Raoul Alexander seizes the stick which bars his passage, and wrenching it from Hepworth's grasp, dashes it to the ground. The action seems to transform Hepworth into a veritable demon. With his left hand

he seizes Raoul Alexander by the collar, and holding him in a grip of iron smites him once—twice—a resounding smack on either cheek—smacks which are plainly heard by the group of clubmen gathered at the windows.

Instantly Raoul Alexander's footman seizes the whip from the coachman's grasp and, the butt-end in position, hurries to the assistance of his master. The porter of the club also dashes down the steps with the same purpose in view. They find themselves confronted, however, by a thick-set man, whose massive shoulders and bullet-like head suggest the professional prize-fighter, and who evidently accompanies Mr. Hepworth to guard against outside interference. Before this ominous figure, both footman and porter shrink back.

In the meantime Raoul Alexander is struggling furiously with his assailant, in the attempt to reach him and return the blows. He is powerless, however, before the great suppleness and strength of the American. Quick as a flash, the latter has swayed him backward and, with a sudden twist, hurls him from him, Raoul Alexander reeling heavily against the wheels of the victoria, bruising one of his temples and

sinking from the force of the shock to one knee.

By this time the scene is one of much confusion. The Prince's coachman is vainly shouting for some one to come and hold his horses, while the footman, held at bay by the American's burly attendant, is making vain efforts to reach his master.

The American bends toward his antagonist, a savage hatred in his face :

“ Now, will you meet me, you coward ! ”

With a cry of fury, Raoul Alexander gathers himself together and advances upon his assailant, bent upon redeeming his discomfiture at all costs. At this juncture, however, several of the clubmen run down the steps and interfere between the combatants. At the same instant two *Sergents-de-ville*, attracted by the commotion, hasten to the scene.

“ You will, please, accompany us,” says one of them to Mr. Hepworth.

“ Very well,” he replies calmly. Then, turning to Raoul Alexander with a gesture of contempt :

“ Now, you will, perhaps, send me your answer ! ” he sneers.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INSULT AT THE CLUB.

WHEN Raoul Alexander reaches home, his attire in disorder, the sting of the American's blow still fresh upon his cheek, Baron Barr finds himself confronted by a being who is little short of a madman.

The valet who hastily appears, prepared to render his master much-needed physical attention, encounters an explosion of wrath that sends him flying from the Prince's presence on the double-quick. For Raoul Alexander cannot in his present condition tolerate even being looked at, and whatever attention he needs he prefers to perform for himself. As he tears off his clothing and dashes water over his injured face, he gives vent to a string of furious oaths that in variety and depth of coloring would outmatch the best efforts of an infuriated coal-heaver on board an Atlantic liner. So wild, so incoherent is he in his fury that it is a long time before Baron Barr can gain any correct idea of what has occurred.

To deliberately question His Highness in his present state of mind would evidently be both unwise and dangerous.

At last, storming and shouting, Raoul Alexander furnishes at least some particulars of what has happened. He was met outside the club by that cursed American and, taken by surprise, had been assaulted. Yes—assaulted—struck in full view of the club windows—before a score or more of people! And, as he recalls these facts. Raoul Alexander goes off into another paroxysm.

“Bah!” exclaims Baron Barr, presently. “Why let this trouble you so greatly? Will he not pay for the insult with his life? He shall cross swords with me before he is forty-eight hours older and, I promise you, I shall lunge to kill.”

But these words, instead of having the soothing effect intended, only bring a howl of rage from Raoul Alexander.

What does he mean! Does the Baron for a moment imagine that he will yield the satisfaction of killing this man to any one else on earth? A royal highness cannot meet this dealer in pork, eh? A million devils! but let him be a pork dealer a hundred times over, and he, Raoul

Alexander, will not forego the satisfaction of having his life. This is the one thing, he feels which can heal the insult, which will restore his prestige in the eyes of those who witnessed the indignity offered him. Arrangements must be made immediately for a meeting.

"Why do you stand there looking at me?" he suddenly exclaims, angrily. "Why don't you go and make these arrangements?"

"Very well," answers the Baron, seeing that Raoul Alexander is not to be deterred from his purpose. "I am to call upon this Lord Clavering, I suppose. You take the stand, of course, that you are replying to the challenge of this morning, and that as the challenged party you have the choice of weapons?"

"What do I care about all that! Anything, so as we meet in the morning."

"Pardon me, but these details are very essential. This American might choose bowie-knives, or some other outlandish weapon with which they fight duels out there. Having as the challenged party the choice of weapons, you will select pistols, of course—since you are a dead shot," he adds, grimly.

Raoul Alexander goes over to a stand on

which a brace of duelling pistols are placed as ornaments.

"Let it be pistols, then," he answers. "From one of these I will send a bullet through his heart at sunrise to-morrow. Go, now, go! do not longer delay."

Baron Barr turns to obey this injunction. At the door he stops.

"Whom shall I select to act with me?" he asks.

"Any one—the first you can get; only don't lose any time. Go to the club; that will be the quickest way to find someone. And," he adds, bitterly, "you might stop a minute there—and—and—hear—what—is—said."

"I will ask De Fontaine, I think," declares the Baron.

"Any one, any one," cries Raoul Alexander, impatiently; "only go. Not a word as to the meeting at the club, though, for fear of any interference."

Upon reaching the club, Baron Barr finds that, as was to be anticipated, the attack upon the Prince is the absorbing topic of discussion. What was the cause which led to the attack? is eagerly asked, on all sides, and no one seems able to furnish any definite information on this point.

As soon as the Baron enters one of the card rooms in search of the Comte de Fontaine, he is surrounded by a number of acquaintances who beset him with questions as to the Prince. Baron Barr, however, proves to be decidedly reticent. He affects to believe that the trouble has grown out of a remark made by the Prince concerning an American statesman, and American politics. The Prince was attacked with such violence! Is he hurt? is eagerly asked. Bah! not in the least, declares Baron Barr. He was taken by surprise; otherwise his assailant might have had cause to regret his temerity. His foot slipped and he received a slight blow on the arm, or shoulder—that was really all. The smiles that cross the faces of several of the auditors as this audacious declaration is made would have sadly discomfited Raoul Alexander could he but have seen them.

At this moment, a man who has entered the room only a few moments before and has been standing some feet away, quietly listening, advances toward the group.

“I am told,” he says in sharp, distinct tones, “that the Prince received a ringing slap first on the right cheek, then on the left.”

Everybody turns toward this bold speaker, who has taken upon himself to so flatly contradict the words of Baron Barr, and in the new-comer most of those present recognize Mr. George Gorman Halstead, First Secretary of the American Legation. To the majority of his auditors his words give unqualified satisfaction, for the Baron's supercilious bearing and arrogant disposition make him anything but popular, but at the same time his readiness to resent affront either real or supposed, and his great skill as a swordsman, cause him to be treated with wholesome respect. For someone to meet the Baron on his own lofty ground, and "call him down," is therefore received with general sentiments of approval.

Baron Barr stares haughtily at the speaker for a moment.

"I have just said," he declares, dogmatically, "that the Prince received only a slight blow upon the arm, or shoulder."

"And I," retorts Mr. Halstead, "I say that I have heard on good authority—from those who actually witnessed the *castigation* administered to the Prince—that he was soundly slapped upon the cheek."

Baron Barr pales with anger, and his teeth are tightly clenched.

"*Monsieur*," he answers, slowly, "when I make a statement, I am not accustomed to have it contradicted with this degree of positiveness."

"Indeed!"

"May I ask," exclaims the Baron, drawing himself up, "if you intend an insult?"

"Insult!" echoes Halstead, with an insolent laugh; "you seem strangely dull of comprehension. Let me relieve your mind of further doubt."

As he speaks he reaches toward the table, and taking up a pack of cards tosses them into the Baron's face.

CHAPTER VIII.

A TRAGIC EPISODE.

LEFT alone after Baron Barr's departure, Raoul Alexander strides uneasily up and down the room; unable to rest—unable to rid his mind of the sting of the humiliating experience through which he has passed. Insulted! Struck! And in full view of a score or more of witnesses at the club windows. Why, the story will be the talk of the clubs, and of all the circles of the gay world of which he is a frequenter! Nothing can restore him in his own eyes, and the eyes of those of his world, save the wiping out of the insult on "the field of honor."

With these thoughts filling his brain, he feels rest impossible until such time at least when Baron Barr shall return with the news that arrangements have been fully carried out for a meeting on the morrow.

Presently, he falls to imagining the details of this meeting. He follows out in his mind's eye the drive in the early morning with his seconds

to some quiet spot in the *Bois*, or to the country in the direction of Neuilly; the arrival on the ground; the carrying out of the usual preliminaries; the measuring off of the ground by the seconds, and finally the placing in position of the principals. He will keep cool, very cool—no anger at that moment; and aim low. Little doubt troubles him as to the result; for, as Baron Barr has truthfully said, he is a “dead shot.”

His aim is, of course, as true as ever? Well; there is little doubt as to that; although he has not kept himself in such good practice of late as at one time, and then his life since the return to Paris has been of so decidedly “rapid” a character, even for him, as to be hardly calculated to steady either the nerves or the hand. *Can* he surely count upon this steadiness of eye and hand?

He goes to the stand, and taking up one of the long-barrelled duelling pistols, levels it at an object in the room. He holds the weapon poised for an instant, and it seems to him, as is indeed the fact in his present excited condition, that the point of the weapon sways with an unsteadiness that bodes ill of the bullet going true to the mark. Ah, if his hand is no steadier than this

to-morrow, his antagonist stands indeed a good chance of walking away unscathed from the field ! The very thought of such a possibility well-nigh maddens him. But, no ; this unsteadiness of hand was a mere matter of the moment ; if he were aiming in earnest, it would be different.

An impulse comes over him to put to a practical test this theory. He goes to a drawer in which are some cartridges, and slips one into the cylinder. Then, pinning a card to the wall, he steps across the room.

Could he hit that card near its centre ? It would have been an easy enough matter for him a few months ago. But now ?

He will soon decide. The shot is not likely to be heard, and what if it is ?

He levels the pistol, and takes careful aim. The pistols are furnished with hair triggers, the lightest touch bringing the hammer down. Twice he drops his arm without firing, feeling that his hand has not yet the necessary steadiness. At the third attempt he gently presses the trigger.

Click ! The hammer falls, but there is no report. The cartridge is a defective one, and for some reason has failed to explode.

In his present irritated condition this trifling incident is sufficient to exasperate him. With an angry curse, he runs to the drawer in search of another cartridge, at the same time impatiently pulling up the hammer of the weapon to examine the cylinder.

As he does so, in his reckless haste incautiously holding the muzzle of the pistol turned full toward him, his nervous fingers slip, there is a loud explosion, and Raoul Alexander staggers heavily forward and drops to the floor, a bullet wound over his heart.

When his servant, who has not heard the report, finds him half an hour later, he is unconscious and breathing only faintly.

CHAPTER IX.

GLEANED FROM THE PRESS.

THE tragic end of Prince Raoul Alexander, heir apparent to the throne of H——, was, as in the case of the unhappy Rudolph of Austria, the subject of multifarious comment and speculation in the newspapers, not alone in Europe, but throughout the civilized world. The advocates of the theories of accident and suicide were about evenly divided. By some believers in the latter theory the hypothesis was put forward that disagreements of a serious nature with His Majesty, the King of H——, had more or less directly led to the act. In other quarters it was contended that the Prince's mind had become somewhat unbalanced by fast living, and others again, remembering the time-worn proverb concerning the omnipresent influence of woman, gave birth to a highly romantic report as to there being a hopeless love affair at the bottom of the case.

Thus for a week or more the newspapers teemed with comment concerning the Prince, and not a few among the articles published would

have caused unbounded surprise to Raoul Alexander himself could he have but seen them. Finally came the lengthy accounts describing the funereal pomp and pageantry attendant upon the laying away in the royal crypt—"mourned by the tears of a sorrowing nation," as the loyalist section of the European press pathetically proclaimed. Next day the papers were full of the projected visit to Europe of an Eastern potentate who, it was averred, would come accompanied by a number of the members of his harem; and save for an occasional reminiscence recounted at odd intervals by some journalist or clubman, Raoul Alexander's name ceased to be mentioned among men. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

* * * * *

The following spring the attention of the Chicago newspapers was much taken up with details in relation to the launching of certain extensive railroad enterprises in the southwest—a series of enterprises backed by a combination of capitalists, in the list of whom the name of John Parker Hepworth, of Chicago, figured prominently. Great and far-reaching consequences were predicted as a result of the operations in question.

A "deal," it was rumored among other things, had been effected with the Santa Fé management, the almost inevitable result of which, it was declared, would be to force the Altonburgh and Denbigh road, against which offensive tactics seemed to have been adopted, into bankruptcy. There was much conflicting discussion as to "tapping" and "paralleling," and railroad wars, and "deals" and "combines"—so much, in fact, that it seemed difficult for the public to clearly grasp just what Mr. John Parker Hepworth and his associates did, or did not intend to do. One fact, however, was patent—that they were making a good deal of a stir, as was very forcibly indicated by the feverish fluctuations in the stock market of the prices of various shares.

In the midst of all this hubbub and excitement an item appeared one morning in the Chicago newspapers in which the name of Hepworth figured, but in a connection somewhat different from usual. This article, as taken from a particular paper, read as follows:

"Miss Edith Zelma Hepworth, daughter of Mr. John Parker Hepworth, the well-known capitalist of this city, was married yesterday to Mr. George Gorman Halstead, of Cincinnati.

The wedding, which took place at the residence of the bride's father, the Rev. Dr. Beechman officiating, was an exceedingly quiet one, only a few relatives and near friends being present. The newly wedded couple will make an extended bridal tour through the South. On their return, they will take up their residence in this city."

And underneath this article appeared one in smaller type, setting forth the following facts for the edification of the paper's readers.

"The marriage of Miss Hepworth to Mr. George Gorman Halstead is an interesting item of news, not only on account of the high social position of the pair, but also because of certain past events in connection with the bridegroom. Mr. Halstead, who belongs to a highly influential family in Cincinnati, was until recently, it will be remembered, attached to the American Legation at Paris as First Secretary. It was while filling this post that the duel between him and the French nobleman, Baron Barr, which made such a stir at the time, took place. The circumstances of this duel, which are still fresh in the public mind, were briefly as follows: One day, at one of the fashionable Paris clubs, Baron Barr and Mr. Halstead became involved in a dispute, the precise nature of which has never been made public. It is supposed, however, to have grown out of some disparaging remarks made by Baron Barr either as to America, or to the detriment of some American friend of Mr. Halstead. There was a brief but sharp interchange of

words, and the dispute culminated in Mr. Halstead throwing a pack of cards into the Baron's face.

"Of course there could be only one outcome to this action, and the Baron's seconds called upon the American with little delay. A meeting occurred next morning, a few miles out of Paris, with swords as the weapons. Both the principals were known as expert fencers, and they fully sustained their respective reputations. A fierce and unusually prolonged struggle ensued, which terminated in the desperate wounding of the Baron, who died in the arms of his seconds. The duel caused a profound sensation at the time.

"Although bearing this record as a 'fire-eater,' Mr. Halstead, it may be added, is of pleasing manners and affable bearing, and was a great favorite in the diplomatic corps and society in general in Paris. His many friends in this country and in Europe will unite in wishing both him and his beautiful bride prosperity and happiness."

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